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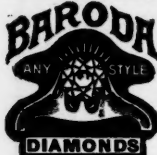
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10¢.

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Largest Manufacturers of Flaked Cereal Foods in the World.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Vol. V

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 5

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

AUGUST

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every
Jar**



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St.

Detroit

Mich.



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5

AUGUST, 1907

NUMBER 5



GRACE GEORGE
In "Divorcons"



Photo by
Otto Sarony Co.,
N. Y.

MISS JULIA SANDERSON
In vaudeville















Photo by
Hall's Studio, N. Y.

MISS HENRIETTA BROWN

Leading woman Keith & Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theater,
New York

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C
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7
XU



Photo by
Hall's Studio,
N. Y.

MISS HOPE LATHAM
In "His House in Order"



Photo by
White, N. Y.

MISS LAURA GUERITE
In "The Orchid"





Photo by
White, N. Y.

MISS IRENE FRANKLIN
In "The Orchid"



Photo by
Sarony, N. Y.

MISS MADELYN MARSHALL
With Weber's Theater Company





Photo by
Otto Sarony Co.,
N. Y.

MISS BETTY DODSWORTH
In "The Belle of Mayfair"

THE RED BARN



BY
**EMMA
LEE
WALTON**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. X. CHAMBERLIN

HELEN STERLING leaned back in her chair and sighed resignedly. The elocutionist was giving his second encore, a lifelike description of the Pikeville Dramatic Club's meeting in the town hall, and she fell to planning a white crêpe de chine with such a rapt expression on her earnest face that the youth on the low platform was moved to fresh exertions. The minister, on her right, was obliged to be attentive to the whole program of seventeen numbers, and her fancy had free rein in flourishes and insertions. She had the sleeves planned, and was frowning over the neck when the chair on her left was pulled softly out, and a man sat down beside her. His beaming face betokened no doubt as to his welcome, and her crêpe de chine faded suddenly out of her mind as the quick color flamed to her cheeks.

"Came out of the West like Young Lochinvar this very morning," he whispered. "I'm located in the Chicago office, and had an important errand here in Stanton. How old were you when you first heard that debating-club thing?"

2

"How did you get here?"

"That Bridget of yours said you'd gone to a doin's at the red church. Cost me a quarter to find out."

"I r-r-ise to state," shouted the elocutionist. "I r-r-ise to s-s-say I h-h-have n-n-nothing to s-say, and will s-s-it d-down!"

"Best thing you can do, old man," the scoffer agreed under cover of the laughter. "How much more is there?"

"The Irishman hasn't spoken yet, and Mr. Baker prides himself on his brogue."

"I thought you didn't know anybody in the suburb?"

"I don't know many. Mr. Davenport here asked me to drop in to-night. He thought it might help me get acquainted."

"It evidently has—with him."

He glanced over the low-ceiled room, the walls of which showed, in spots, the penetrating force of the spring rains, and noted the audience. These were the people among whom her lines had been cast for the past three months, and therefore interested him. He was agreeably surprised in them, for Stan-

ton had never been a fashionable suburb, and he had expected less. Stanton, before becoming a suburb, had been a village, and these were still villagers. He wondered how long it would be before the new people, like the Sterlings, would make them suburbanites.

"This isn't a bit like our old Mobile gatherings," he said, with a laugh. "Is this the extreme of gaiety here? Or do they have real social stunts?"

"You must not malign the town," she reproved. "I've been to a lot of things since I came."

A woman in purple velvet glared at them impatiently over her shoulder, and they subsided for a time, though the things he had to say were so many he always wondered how he held his peace so long.

"Shall I be killed by our neighbor if I ask after your father?"

"He's in Europe."

"Business or pleasure? Did I come so near missing you?"

"It's business. A secret mission for the Bentley Manufacturing Company. Even the senior partner doesn't know exactly where he is, and he doesn't write even to me for fear some one will find out. It's quite exciting. He's their auditor, you know."

"Is this Mr. Do-dad going home with you?" he asked, a shadow passing over his face. "If he is, I'm coming, too. I'm going to have my innings for a while now. Do you realize it is nearly two years since I went away?"

"Queer! I was thinking of it today."

"Were you, really?" His tone was eager.

"Yes. I gave our laundress that pink dimity this morning, that you stepped on and tore the day you left. She said it had kept its color 'remarkable' for two years."

"Plunk! Down to earth again! I was breaking home ties and starting out to make my fortune that day, and was highly rattled. Is that really the end of Pikeville? Do we have to go up and offer condolences, or do we just let him live it down? For goodness' sake let

me take you out to 'chow,' wherever it is."

The audience pushed back chairs and fell into laughing groups, and the minister turned toward her with an eagerness that was not lost on the other.

"There are times when I'd like to be a layman," he laughed. "For if I had had a little conversation during the last few minutes I would have lost my job. I'd like to meet your friend, Miss Sterling."

"This is Mr. Gordon, Mr. Davenport. We used to know each other in Mobile long before he went to Hawaii. I feel as though he had dropped from the clouds to-night."

Gordon gave the minister a quick, comprehensive glance, and felt a keen disappointment to find him young and broad-shouldered, with a twinkle in his eye that belied the sobriety of his clerical garb. He was provoked with himself to realize that he would have preferred a white-haired minister if Helen Sterling were inclined to do him favors. As a sort of penance for such unworthy thoughts, he offered to get the dishes of ice-cream from the much-ornamented table at the far corner of the room, and made his way through the crowd as best he could.

At the corner he stood in line with the young women in white frippery aprons, and gazed for some time at the table with its load of all the plated silver that looked solid, that could be begged from neighbors. A large, plump woman, with pink bows on her apron, was standing in front of him, and beside her a young girl evidently just from school. At first he paid no heed to their conversation, but suddenly his attention was arrested by a familiar name.

"I said it was Mr. Davenport and Miss Sterling, and she said she'd heard it, too," the older woman was saying. "But, of course, you can't tell with those high and mighty women."

"I was wondering if that was the girl Molly wrote me about," the other said. "Is it announced yet, Mrs. Anderson?"

"No, indeed, but she doesn't deny it, she just laughs. Annette asked her—Annette would do anything. They make

a fine-looking couple, and he's awfully devoted."

The room whirled around him for a few moments, but when it steadied a bit he turned his white face in the direction of those two he had left. They did make a fine-looking couple, sure enough, and the minister was splendid as he stood there looking down at her. It must be a comfort to have a rival one could despise! It did not seem possible he could have come so far just to lose her, after all. Yet what reason had he for expecting anything else? He had acted as though there were plenty of time, and there had not been a moment to lose—with a girl like Helen. His years seemed to grow upon him of a sudden, and he felt old and sick at heart. He was tempted to turn and run away, but he straightened up involuntarily, and resolved to have the walk home, anyway.

"Don't you want your cream?" the girl behind the table asked, touching his sleeve. "That's been there some time, and it'll melt if you don't hurry."

He took malicious satisfaction in giving Davenport the cream with the fewest strawberries in, though his content was lessened when he found that gentleman did not notice the slight.

"Did you have trouble getting it?" Helen asked. "I was just going to send out a search-party for you."

"There was a crowd," he said. "And of course I wanted to pick out the largest and best helpings."

"I thought possibly one of the apron-strings had caught you," Davenport said. "A woman looks best in an apron."

"I am partial to pink dimity," Gordon replied affably, though he longed for nothing so much as to be able to choke him then and there. "Or possibly white mull."

He would tell her what he had come to say, and he would say it though she were engaged to a thousand ministers. Not to-night, though, it was too soon. To-morrow it would be easier to bear, coward that he was!

"Mr. Baker is going to favor us with another Irish selection, Miss Sterling,"

the pastor said. "We must turn our chairs broadside on so that he can get the inspiration of our faces."

A man who might be a deacon or an elder came toward them, and, while he engaged the attention of Davenport, Gordon set the cream dishes just where some luckless fellow would be most apt to sit on them, and turned to Helen with a sudden masterful tenderness.

"Put on your duds and come on," he said. "We'll go home and thus avoid irritating our purple friend any more."

He wanted to slip away unnoticed, but Helen gently insisted on making her excuses to her host, and the recitation had begun before they left. Like a pair of thieves they slipped out into the night, and were so gleeful over their escape that they had gone a square before they noticed that rain was falling. He wanted to go for umbrellas, but she would not allow it, and they hurried on in silence to her house. The clock was striking eleven when he put her key in the lock, so he held out his hand for good night. As she put hers into it he opened his lips to say something, and closed them again suddenly.

"Another great saying lost to the world," she laughed. "Won't you tell me some time?"

"To-morrow," he said earnestly. "I'll call for you at three and take you for a drive. Good night."

Then he turned up his collar, pulled his hat down over his eyes, and strode out into the night toward the country, with the swinging gait of one who intends to walk for hours. And not until he had long disappeared did she remember that she had forgotten to offer him an umbrella.

II.

It seemed to Gordon as though Helen had never been so entirely charming before as she was when she came down the steps toward him the following afternoon. She seemed to fit into the warm spring sunshine like a dryad from some forest primeval, and her bright, happy face made his heart bound with sudden pain at the remem-

brance of the bitter fact that he had lost her. Poor fool that he was not to have noticed that the smile she vouchsafed him was scarcely warmer than the quick glance she gave the newsboy

eyeing an ink-spot on her glove. "They sent me such a fresh one that the ink is still wet. I'll put it here on the seat, and if you aren't sufficiently interesting I'll read."



The chair on her left was pulled softly out, and a man sat down beside her.

who handed the evening paper to her as she came down the walk!

"Shall I put the paper in my pocket?" he asked. "You don't want to be bothered with it."

"No, thank you," she replied, ruefully

"We'd better take the hill road toward town, hadn't we?" he asked, gathering up the reins. "The country roads will be swamps after last night's rain."

"Mr. Davenport says they are positively impassable."

Gordon frowned and slashed at a weed with his whip.

"Are pastoral visitations always such early ones?"

"He came to return a book. I told him last night I did not expect to be home this afternoon. I had an appointment at the dressmaker's."

She had not gone—what might it not mean for him!

"Did you put her off just for me?"

"No, she called me up herself to break it."

"Yes, but that was this morning," he said triumphantly. "You did intend to postpone it for me!"

Helen reached for the newspaper, but he put out his hand and stopped her.

"No, you don't!" he said, with a laugh. "We'll talk of anything that particularly interests you now; Davenport, for instance, and then when we pass the red barn on the farther slope I shall choose my topic. Turn about is fair play. What sort of man is he?"

"Quiet and not a bit masterful," she said belligerently. "Quick on the up-take and fond of antique rugs."

"There's one in my office he can have for a song," Gordon said. "Its antiquity is apparent in many spots, but particularly in front of my chair, and in the absence of fringe in the place where the fringe ought to grow. Go on."

She was sharply conscious that they were wasting time in idle banter, but her usually keen insight failed to discover just how serious a mood his light words covered. Was he glad that he had come again after so terribly long an absence, or did he care at all?

"His sermons are eloquent," she said enthusiastically. "And everybody in the parish loves him."

"I've noticed it," he said grimly. "Every one of his parishioners that I've met seems to."

"Don't be foolish!"

"What do you bring up foolish topics for? Man's cue is always to follow woman's lead—at least, until he reaches a red barn. The weather is always a safe topic."

"There's a great deal to be said about weather," she said. "To-day is glori-

ous, and I'm glad I'm alive. A day like this is so beautiful it always makes me want to cry."

He held out a neatly folded handkerchief.

"Go ahead," he said. "Don't mind me."

She laughed gaily as they drove on through the mud and the puddles, and his heart sank within him as he guided the horse around the ruts and tried to watch the lights and shadows playing over her face. He fell to wondering once what it would be like to fight for a girl like that through all his life. A happy, whole-souled optimism, a whole-some faith in God and man, made her altogether different, and much to be beloved. And how he would love her!

"It's a long way to the barn," he said suddenly. "Let's compromise."

"No, indeed. Do you think I can get that ink off my glove?"

"Surely. Those are pretty," he said, looking straight into her dark eyes. "I'm devoted to brown."

"I am wondering who was calling me when I came out," she went on regardlessly. "The telephone-bell was ringing furiously, and Maggie is out, too."

"What a pity!" he cried, in mock dismay. "You don't suppose it could have been Davenport, do you?"

"I'm going to read you the news," she said severely, unfolding the paper. "You need discipline, and I'll find it here."

"All right, go ahead! The barn is half a mile away. Get up, Dobbin!"

She regarded the steed with a critical eye.

"That horse isn't a Dobbin. It's a modern, up-to-date horse. Call him Roosevelt."

"He isn't strenuous; he's too slow. The liveryman asked me if I were going to take out a young lady."

They drove along in silence for a short time, and Helen fell to dreaming, the newspaper lying unnoticed in her lap. She was so thoroughly, serenely happy that her throat ached and she was almost frightened. The cool air was deliciously delicate with spring scents, and

she was certain she had never known so perfect a day. As they drove on they passed under a natural bower of trees arching the road, the sunlight flickering through the brilliant green, and Helen drew in her breath with a quick exclamation of delight. Quite unconsciously she laid her hand on his arm, but when he turned to look at her she was gazing over the fields, and he saw nothing but the back of her head—graceful but unsatisfactory.

"We are nearly to the barn," he said irrelevantly.

She picked up the paper again and started to read. "What made the miners and operators agree——"

Then she stopped suddenly with a quick sob, and he turned to look at her. Her face was white to the very lips, and her hands shook so that the paper rattled when she held it toward him. He drew the horse in shortly, and put his hand over hers to steady the sheet.

"It's father," she said, in a voice so low that he could scarcely hear it. "Yesterday in Paris all alone. My father—my own father!"

He took the paper from her and read it for himself in all the pitiful bareness of print. There was little to it, just the brief mention of the cablegram received shortly before going to press, a message telling of his death in a Paris hotel the day before, but it was terrible in its brevity. He laid the paper on her lap and looked straight ahead of him, hopelessly dumb. What could he say in the face of such a grief? They had stopped at the fork of the roads, and the trivial red barn was just ahead, but he could not say that now, perhaps ever. It would only hurt her worse, if possible. She had buried her face in his coat-sleeve, and for a brief moment he held her in his arms.

"Helen," he repeated softly. "Helen, Helen!"

She was not crying—it would have been better if she had been able to cry. She was crushed in all the gaiety of the spring day; struck down by the cruel blow. In the first futile attempt at realization her whole consciousness battled against the truth, crying out that it

could not be so. Her father was her all, the only one in the wide world who really belonged to her—and now he was gone—gone! She was left desolate, but her thought was not of herself, but of him who had died so many leagues away, alone and suffering, ministered to by hireling hands in the stead of her own.

"Somehow," she said, in a muffled voice, "I never dreamed it would come so. Everybody loved him, and yet—he had to go alone, without the comfort of even a friend, in a dreary hotel. Oh, Rob! Rob!"

He touched her hair with gentle fingers, and she sat up quickly, her white face turned straight forward.

"Will you please drive on?" she asked, with a little catch in her voice. "And drive fast."

Gordon touched up the horse, and they sped up the road to the left, avoiding the barn, on down the slope and through a long, long lane before another low hill made speed impossible to the breathless animal. Helen sat for many minutes motionless the while he longed to help her as he had not the right to do. He could not intrude his love on her sorrow, and he could not bear to let her see how much of her suffering he noted. Finally she lifted the paper again in her shaking grasp, and read over the brief, cruel announcement staring at her.

"That was the telephone," she said, as if to herself. "It was a call from the newspaper office. They wanted to tell me and ask me about him."

Gordon was silent, pitifully conscious for the first time of his manly uselessness. She paid no heed, but sat with her tense hands clasped tightly together in her lap, her set face turned forward, her lips trembling, as white as though no color had ever filled them. She was arguing, fighting, with all the stubborn determination of her nature, yet conscious all the time of the terrible testimony whose truth she could not question. He was so strong, so well, so full of life and fun, she could not credit the evidence of her eyes that he was dead. Dead! How much it meant, the

one word, to her, so alone in her grief! Yet how could it be when——

"Rob," she said suddenly, "it says it was heart-disease." He nodded.

"He passed an examination for additional life insurance the week before he left."

"He did?"

She spoke with difficulty but determination, realizing that some explanation, however brief, must be her due.

"I can't understand it. Why do you suppose Mr. Bentley didn't tell me and——and spare me this?"

"Possibly he didn't know," Gordon said gently. "It might be."

"Father was with Mr. Bentley's brother," she insisted, puzzled. "Maybe he knows more. I wish I might see him."

"Shall we go there?"

"How far are we from the city?"

"About five miles."

"Do you think we have time to drive in?"

"We can take time. If Maggie is out, there will be no one to worry."

Worry? There was no one to worry any more, ever—ever—ever——

"Then we'll go to Mr. Bentley's office. Will you stand by me, Rob?"

"Always."

She smiled with a wan wistfulness that made him wild to hold her tight forever in his strong arms, but he merely gripped the reins more firmly and turned his whole attention to the horse for the rest of the silent drive.

III.

Seated in his private office, Morris Bentley was looking over the late mail, pausing now and then to spear the blotter with his paper-knife as a relief for overcharged feelings of some sort, when the boy brought in a card and stood awaiting orders.

"Miss Sterling, eh?" he said, reddening. "Show her in, and mind you, leave us alone until I ring."

"There's a gent with her."

"He may wait outside."

"Yes, sir."

A moment later the door opened, and

Helen, as white as the paper he held in his hand, stood on the threshold. Behind her Bentley could see, as he rose, the broad shoulders of a young man whose brown face wore a more seriously determined expression than he wished to see.

"Come in, Miss Sterling," he said cordially. "Be seated, if you please."

"Thank you, Mr. Bentley. This is Mr. Gordon. He drove me to town to see you."

"Glad to meet you, sir, but possibly Miss Sterling would prefer a private interview. You will pardon my frankness, sir."

Gordon put his hand on the knob again and looked inquiringly at Helen.

"I shall be glad if you will close the door and remain here," she said, with a quick glance of appeal. "What we have to say, Mr. Bentley, may be said before Mr. Gordon."

"Your legal adviser?"

Bentley's tone was crisp and curt, and she seemed to take her cue from it.

"My friend and father's. I have seen the evening papers, Mr. Bentley."

"Yes?" It was what he had expected as only natural, but he could not meet her eyes as he answered; and she went on quickly:

"Yes; and I have come to ask why you—you let me find it out that way. It was cruel!"

He had recovered himself, and his reply was freighted with sinister meaning.

"I can tell you, but only alone."

Her determination to be justly dealt with upheld her, and she met the veiled threat with a cool: "It is now or not at all."

She was so slight, so firm, so pitiful, Gordon's heart ached for her.

"Sit down, Helen," he said, drawing up a large chair. "You will be worn out."

She sank into it without a protest, and he stood behind her, leaning on the back of it while he listened.

"I did it for your best good," Bentley said diffidently. "I did not know how else to shield you. I know little

about such things, and I thought you would wish it so."

"It wasn't heart-disease," she said firmly. "What was it?"

He looked at the blotter for a long minute before he made reply.

Gordon seized the opportunity to study him unobserved, trying to sift pretense from sincerity and discover a weak spot for attack. Bentley seemed unconscious of the scrutiny, and answered her query with the simplicity of a man who has made an error of judgment.

"Nothing, Miss Sterling. The newspaper notice is—is not true."

She gazed at him unseeing, and the color came and went in her face as emotion swayed her. Could this be the truth on which she might rely, or was the other real and this the lie? Was there any truth in it, or was it all a hideous dream from which she should wake presently, shuddering in the dark?

"Not true?" she murmured at length. "Not true?"

"What in Heaven's name has happened?" Gordon cried, stepping forward. "Why do you prolong the agony?"

"I fail to recognize your right to interfere, Mr.—ah, Gordly. This is not a matter of your affairs, unless, indeed, you are Miss Sterling's——"

"Miss Sterling asks for my help," he said sharply. "Though there seems to be precious little I can do. Go on!"

"Well, then," Bentley said surlily, "he is not dead."

Helen sat a moment in stunned wonderment, and then buried her face in her handkerchief, her shoulders shaking with relief from the sorrow that had not brought the tears. To Gordon it was unbearable.

"Then what does this damned notice mean?" he cried. "For God's sake, go on!"

"Such language before a lady!" Bentley cried lightly, his small eyes narrowing as he returned the gaze Gordon bent on him. "It means I have protected Miss Sterling from a lifelong disgrace because I admired her father before——"

"Before what?"

"Before he took from us that to which he had no right."

Helen rose suddenly and stood before him, her eyes flashing through her tears. How could he? How could he even think such a thing?

"My father!" she cried. "My father!"

Bentley shrugged his shoulders with a fine show of sympathetic concern, while Gordon drummed on the back of the chair, a deep frown furrowing his forehead as his troubled and angry eyes noted every changing expression of the man before him.

"Your excitement is natural, but pray be calm," Bentley said quietly. "Mr. Sterling was in a tight place financially and falsified the books just before he went abroad. If we had not honored him with the foreign mission we should not have discovered it for some time. Of course we trusted him implicitly, for in all these years he has been the soul of honor."

"I can't believe it."

A despairing conviction that this man was speaking the truth seized her, even while she protested, and she regretted her angry rejection of what he must know to be a surety.

"Please be seated again. I could not believe it, either, but it is none the less the pitiful truth," Bentley went on. "Now, if I may suggest, I think it will be best to let the story of his death pass as true, and thus enable him to remain abroad with another name and begin again. There we can find work for him, and it is only fair to give another chance to a man who has fallen for the first and only time."

Helen made no reply, but sat gazing at a dark spot on the carpet, with hot cheeks. She remembered afterward that even at that moment she wondered whether the spot were ink or tar. Gordon leaned idly on the back of the chair and played with a button in the leather. He appeared abstracted, but he was never more alive to what was passing than at that moment.

"It is not what we would do for any

THE RED BARN



"Don't you want your cream?" the girl behind the table asked, douching his sleeve.

one else, Miss Helen," Bentley went on quietly. "But your father was with us so many years in the South, that we feel it is only just to let the matter be, and say nothing whatsoever to those to whom we owe no explanation."

"You are very kind," Helen said, with helpless gratitude. "But I can't seem to get used to it."

"Very naturally. That was why I wanted to talk to you. You were out last evening? I thought so. I telephoned you then, and again a few minutes ago, but the papers printed the notices somewhat earlier than I expected. I feared they would telephone you first. I think I chose the best way," he added pleadingly. "Don't you?"

"I suppose so, but it was rather—rather hard."

"I had not calculated on that," he said, with regret. "I meant to tell you myself."

In the tragedy of it all she felt weakly dependent on him, and the simple pathos of her gesture when she held out her hand to him was heartrending, as she asked, with a catch in her voice: "What shall I do?"

"I am afraid there is nothing for you to do for some time. You had better not write to him—indeed, I do not know where he is at present. You must wait until he writes to you."

"I don't see how I can."

"It will be hard," he said sympa-

thetically. "But you appear plucky enough to bear it. As to your finances——"

"I have plenty, Mr. Bentley."

He dipped his pen into the ink and reached for his check-book.

"I'll write you a check, nevertheless, Miss Helen, that will help you for a time—at least until you hear from your father."

Something, she knew not what, protested against receiving a favor from a man who could believe such a thing of her father, and her voice trembled as she made her stout reply:

"I'd rather not."

"I shall mail it, then."

She shook her head. "I have enough, Mr. Bentley, and I can always earn more."

"It is the least we can do for a man so long in our employ."

"No, thank you!"

He frowned and laid down his book.

"Very well, as you please, of course. But if you need it, will you let me know?"

"You are very kind, and I thank you again. Father will be grateful. I hope you are not in trouble from—from it?"

"We close our doors Thursday," he said ruefully. "But it can't be helped, Miss Helen; what's done's done."

Helen was very white as she rose to go, and when she held out her hand Gordon saw that it trembled. He hated Bentley and his "Miss Helens" from that moment with all the bitterness of his soul.

"I feel so dazed I know I seem ungrateful," Helen said. "But I thank you, and I shall say more when—when I have had time to think."

"So shall I," Gordon said grimly. But he did not take the hand Bentley held out to him.

Helen was worn and tired from the strain of the interview, but her pluck kept her up, and she showed it only by an occasional quiver of her sensitive lips. Gordon had a mad desire to pick her up and run away with her, but, instead, he made a commonplace suggestion.

"If you prefer, we can take the train

back," he said, as Bentley closed the door after them. "It would get us there quicker."

"I'd rather drive," she said, with a little sigh. "If you won't mind my not talking."

"I want time to think, myself," he said. "By Jove, I left my gloves in that office! Would you mind waiting here for just a minute?"

He opened the office door suddenly, his step unheard on the soft carpet, and found himself again facing the senior partner. Bentley was tilted back in his chair, spearing the blotter with his pen, a satisfied smile lighting his face oddly in the dimness of his private room. Gordon bowed apologetically.

"I'm sorry to bother you, but my gloves——"

"They are on the back of the chair," Bentley said, rising hastily. "Not at all, don't mention it. Good day."

There was nothing remarkable, after all, in such a scene, yet Gordon, as he took up the reins and drove away, remembered the smile, and looked back over his shoulder, frowning to himself. What did it all mean?

IV.

"I don't care for any supper, Maggie," Helen said. "But you may bring something to the library for Mr. Gordon, please."

The ride home had been chilling, so the fire in the library was very welcome to them both. Helen held out her hands to the blaze gratefully as she pulled off her gloves. When she turned about she found Gordon had moved the davenport up close to the grate and spread the pillows out invitingly.

"Take off your hat and prepare to be cozily comfortable," he said, thumping the cushions. "You're going to snuggle down and rest, milady."

He took her wrap, and she sank obediently into comfort, with an involuntary sigh of weariness.

"I'm going to forage for myself!" he

cried gaily. "That is, if you don't mind."

He was gone before she could have protested, had she so desired.

"I'm getting supper, Maggie," he said at the door of the kitchen. "May I have anything I find?"

"Sure. Ixcept the bacon, that's fer brakfast."

"Lettuce, bread, jam, tea, cold lamb, crackers—I see a feast!" he cried, busy at once. "Maggie, who called Miss Sterling up on the telephone last evening?"

"Last night, sor? Not a sowl, sor."

"Are you sure? Not Mr. Bentley, for instance?"

"Not a livin', br'athin' sowl, sor. I was after sittin' right under the tili-phone all avenin'. I'm that scared to sit ferninst the back door when I'm stark alone I'm allus sittin' in the dinin'-room."

"To be sure. Now, please see if Miss Sterling needs anything, will you? She's very tired."

Helen's eyes brightened when she saw the inviting tray Gordon brought with him, and she sat up and smiled wanly as he set it on the chair before her. The tea and the lettuce sandwiches were too much of a temptation, and she forgot her hasty resolution not to eat, and did ample justice to the little spread. It seemed to Gordon as if he had never been so nearly starved before.

"Some of those sandwiches have lamb in," he remarked, from his seat on the floor. "I learned that salad-dressing from a Hawaiian gentleman. It doesn't take a minute."

"It's fine. I didn't know I was hungry."

"Hungry and cold. Isn't that fire a beaut?"

"It's comforting. I—I have a great deal to be thankful for," she said tremulously. "You're awfully good to me, Rob."

"I'll take to mistreating you, if it's going to make you feel so badly," he smiled. "More tea?"

"No, thank you. I shouldn't get to sleep to-night if I did."

He picked up the tray and took it back to Maggie, returning with his pockets full of apples, which he displayed proudly.

"One for each spike on the grate," he said. "And when they're done, I must go home."

Out in the kitchen Maggie's voice was lifted in an Irish love-song, and the strains reached their ears as she passed in and out about her work.

"I was singing yesterday," Helen said bitterly. "I wonder if it's always so."

Gordon made no reply, but bent over to turn an apple and poke the fire, and she went on.

"He seemed real and honest. I felt his sympathy all the time, yet I feel now that he was hiding something."

"Hiding a smile," Gordon said, jabbing the coals viciously. "I never liked him a minute, and I'd like nothing better than to trap him in his own game, whatever it is."

"Yet, I can't see," she mused—"I can't see any motive for deceiving me."

"Aye! there's the rub."

"You will help me, won't you?"

"With all my strength, and the whole of my kingdom, such as it is!"

"Rob!" she said suddenly. "Do you believe—"

"No, I don't." He turned his honest face toward her, and she felt strangely comforted.

"Why not?"

"My reasons haven't been thought out yet."

But Helen had her reason:

"There was something I didn't like in the very way he put his pen in the ink."

Gordon did not laugh; he was used to Helen's methods of reasoning.

"Of course," she said, sitting bolt upright—"of course one ought not to believe anything of the sort, from filial loyalty, but other people's fathers—you know."

Gordon stood the poker up in the corner but held his peace.

"You see, there was Mr. Hopper and there was Mr. Bancroft, both nice men, and they—they did. I suppose their

daughters didn't believe, either. But Mr. Bentley was—well, you saw him."

It was heartrending to hear that quiet voice whose little, tremulous thrilling showed the agony behind its composure.

"Yes," Gordon said slowly, "I know what you mean."

"There's something behind it, but what?"

"That is for us to find out, Helen."

"I'd feel so alone if it weren't for you, but I don't want to be a bother," she said pitifully.

"Helen!"

"Well, I might be. Father has always been all I ever had of my very own, and I forget I have no claim on others," she went on. "If I had ever had a mother I wouldn't feel so deserted. Other girls have mothers who take them in their arms and say comforting, lovely things, but I don't know what it is to have felt a mother's arms around me. Oh, mother, mother, if you could only come back and say: 'Poor, poor, little Nelly!'"

The fire died down to red coals, the little, leaping flames falling out of sight in the depths of the hearth, but Gordon did not stir.

"To think!" she cried passionately. "To think of father's betraying the trust my mother placed in him! How could he have loved so true and holy a woman; how could he feel himself a man, and do this horrible, despicable thing? Where can a girl turn, what can she trust to, when her own father is weighed and found wanting?"

Gordon had sat gazing into the fire for a long time in silence, then he rose and paced the floor in deep thought.

"I'm awkward at talking," he said, in a low voice. "And I can't think what to say, but I know what I feel. There isn't a grander, nobler man on the face of the globe than Abner Sterling. He would no more stoop to such a thing as this than—than St. John. I'd trust him with everything I have, and my life besides. Why, Helen, ever since I was a little shaver I've had him for my ideal Christian. He never flaunted his religion, but it's the kind you can

rely on for true blue. Don't I remember when my father died and Abner Sterling came to see us? Why, he was the only one that didn't make us feel God was punishing us. Why, Helen, I never believed in anything until I really knew Abner Sterling, and if he failed me now—why, Helen, he can't!"

She looked up at him and smiled radiantly through her tears.

"Oh, yes, yes, Rob, it's all true!" she cried. "He couldn't have done it, I know he didn't do it, but thank you for telling me! Go on. Oh! please go on."

"Sometimes these days we feel we can't trust any man, every one is so deep in some questionable thing," he went on. "And we get confoundedly pessimistic. Then we are granted the privilege of knowing a man like your father, and we realize what it means to fight a good fight and keep the faith by the grace of the whole armor of God. It is men like him and women like you that make life worth living."

His face, still lighted with the glow his defense had brought, shone with a new happiness. He had been of use, a comfort, to her, and the knowledge was ecstasy. He could think of nothing now but her, and a boyish diffidence held his tongue. He could not say what he wanted to say now—the red barn was still over the hill. The clock was striking to remind him that she was tired, and he must go home.

"My apples are done," he said dolefully. "And I must go back to town. I'll leave my card with Jean's address and the phone number, and if you need me remember I am on my vacation, and my time is yours."

She rose and stood in the firelight, looking down at the drying apples.

"I don't know how to thank you, Rob," she said. "You have been a comfort to me to-night."

He held out his hand and took hers gently in it.

"Good-by," he said. "Do try to get a good night's rest."

At the corner, as he went away, radiantly uplifted and joyous, he passed a familiar figure, and looked back just in time to see Davenport mount the

steps he had just descended. He had forgotten Davenport! His heart sank at the sight of him, and he strode on despondently, the light dying out of his face as suddenly as a lamp is extinguished. His happy thoughts vanished, and he felt the hollowness of all things

sumption, and if they were sorrowful and not to be desired, he might show a little of his right to comfort her.

V.

Gordon was less hopeful of results than he cared to admit, and his efforts



He drew the horse in shortly, and put his hand over hers to steady the sheet.

as never before. He walked away groaning in spirit, the old rebellious pride declaring he would tell her that he loved her, anyhow, come what might, but not until he had won the right by finding the truth about her father. If the discoveries he might make were welcome she might forgive his pre-

in the next few weeks were so fruitless that he could not but feel that nothing that he had it in his power to do would avail. His was not the character to be daunted by obstacles, however, and the oftener he found his investigations blocked the more determined he was never to give over. Sometimes as

he looked at the matter in the cold light of practical mornings he wondered why he had undertaken such an enterprise. After all, his faith in Sterling was not a convincing argument to present to others who could present such overwhelming proof that men as estimable as he had made way with the property of others and reason that there was no cause for imagining him stronger than his fellows in the face of temptation.

Gordon's business had called him away from the city for so long a time that he had forgotten the ways of his world, and the inopportune moments he chose for interviews might explain at another time the rebuffs he suffered from pompous office-boys. The officers of the Bentley Manufacturing Company were regularly refused to visitors since their sudden failure and resumption, and it was only by camping for hours in an outer office that Gordon finally obtained an interview with the vice-president.

This man, Gordon felt assured, after some conversation, was not aware of anything irregular in the business, and was not inclined to discuss the falsification, so he let him go reluctantly, as one drops back in the water the little fish that one has caught when angling for bigger prey.

Adams was to be in town but two days, and intended to leave again, thereafter, for the travels that occupied his entire time. Gordon wanted to hint his suspicions, but Adams held his watch in his hand, tapped his foot impatiently, and he was afraid to reach for the shadow for fear of losing the substance. What he learned was not news. Mr. Sterling was in Europe, where he had been working on books in the branch offices of the firm; his address was not known at present, as he had been on work that Mr. Bentley's brother wished kept secret. That was all. Would Mr. Gordon kindly excuse a busy man, now?

Gordon went to report to Helen oftener than he had anything to report, though he took it very much to heart that he had so signally failed. He would so much have enjoyed being able

to give her good news from time to time.

She herself had the best piece of news for him one Saturday afternoon when he stopped in to see her. "Stopping in" was the way he expressed it to himself, though he had to take a train to do so.

Mrs. Anderson and her sister Annette were there when he came, but they discreetly departed, after they had taken an inventory of him and mentally settled his affairs. He remembered the conversation between Mrs. Anderson and the girl, and wondered, smiling to himself, whether he might not be the topic at the next meeting.

"They're kind people," Helen sighed, as the door closed after them. "They think it scandalous that I wear no black, and yet they come to see me and send me flowers. Mrs. Anderson was asking for details to-day, and I've just had a letter from him—think of that!"

"By Jove! What does he say?"

"The happiest letter!" she cried radiantly. "Not a word about trouble. Just sorry not to see me, that's all. It's short because he had a chance to get it mailed in Berlin, and wrote in a hurry. Here, read it!"

She thrust it into his hand, and he read it through, his eyes moistening at the tenderness of this man's affection for his daughter, expressed in his caressing humor.

"What do you think of it?" she asked, as he folded it again. "I don't need to ask. It isn't the letter of—a man like that."

"No, it's not," he said decidedly. "He certainly knows of nothing wrong, that's clear."

"Well, how can we help him?"

The "we" was delicious to his ears.

"I wish to Heaven I knew! I am busy again now, but I spend every evening working as well as I can. I can consult a detective——"

"Not yet," she cried. "Not till we have interviewed everybody and turned all the stones we can ourselves. I can't bear to have anybody else know about it—though I had to tell Mr. Davenport, of course."

His heart sank like lead.

"But you let me work for you," he said, in self-consolation. "How are you getting on here yourself?"

"Beautifully, though I have had numerous visits of condolence that trouble me a good deal. I can't bear to be acting a lie all these days."

"If I ever have any more sorrows," Gordon said emphatically, "I hope to goodness everybody but my most intimate friends will let me alone. I can't understand how bereaved people take so much satisfaction in the stir they make. Grief is sacred."

"It's kindness," Helen said. "I appreciate it. Only I wish I might know."

Gordon echoed the wish many times as he left the house, pondering the letter that made him all the surer that there was something to know. Surely her father could not write such a letter if he were guilty of any wrong-doing whatever. It was the letter of a man with a free and happy conscience, whose only regret was that distance so separated them. Bentley, he said, kept him informed as to his daughter's health, and, he trusted, notified her regularly that he continued well.

"And this is the first word I've had!" Helen cried. "What a pitifully big world this is!"

Theory after theory, brought forward and rejected again, occupied many evenings, and Helen was almost despairing. In default of all other proof to the contrary she was at times almost inclined to believe the story of the senior partner, which was corroborated by the rest of the firm and seemed the simplest, after all. Then she would remember the letter, and recall the nobility of her father's nature, and she would recoil, ashamed of harboring such a thought. The strain was too great for her, and she felt weak and world-weary and lonely more than once.

Gordon was extremely anxious about her, and, being haunted by her thin, sad face, he hastened away from a dinner in her neighborhood one night, to go and ask if she had not better stop the church work she had become so thoroughly interested in. With all her

worry, she surely had enough without taking the sorrows of others so to heart. She sympathized so earnestly with every little good-for-nothing ragamuffin that she wore herself out. In this opinion, he told himself, he was entirely unprejudiced, and was arguing in exactly the fashion he should have, had the leader of the flock been an elderly individual. He was planning how he would scold her, as he swung along toward her house, and was so intent on his thoughts that he did not see Davenport until he was right upon him.

"Hello, Gordon!" the minister hailed him gaily. "I've just come from Miss Sterling's."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. I've been trying to get her to travel for health. This trouble is wearing her out."

Gordon groaned inwardly. His persuasions would come as an anticlimax and have but comical effect now.

Davenport held out his hand.

"Aren't you going to congratulate me?" he asked, flushing. "Or hasn't she told you?"

"Certainly, with all my heart," Gordon said lamely. "I am very, very glad."

"Thank you," the minister said, smiling. "Good night."

Gordon stood looking after him as long as the light from the street-lamp permitted, and then he turned on his heel swiftly and strode back to the station to take the next train to town.

VI.

Jean Sherman's box-party reached the theater early, or else there was some delay on the stage, Gordon did not know which, and there was ample time for settling opera-cloaks and for conversation, before the curtain rose. He had come under protest, but he had been at home so little of late years that he did not feel it right to disappoint his sister who so much wished him to be "nice" to her visitor. Gordon had been as "nice" as possible to please her, and he was considerably amused to catch a gratified glance exchanged by

Jean and her husband as they entered the box. Young married people are ever great match-makers, and scheme and plan until it is a marvel when they have not broken up all old valued friendships through a too great desire to have them something more.

Seated just behind the guest, Gordon studied her in the intervals of conversation, and compared her mentally with Jean, Miss Haskins, and Helen. She was a small person whose whole time was taken up being vivacious, a decidedly pretty girl, but one who was well calculated to wear out the nerves of the ordinary man in a week's acquaintance. Jean was statuesque and serious, and he could not reconcile the friendship at all with her usual tastes. She treated Miss Prentice with an affectionate condescension, and Miss Prentice never seemed to desire anything more from her or any one else. If she had any depth to her nature, as Jean loyally affirmed, she succeeded admirably in hiding it. Miss Haskins, seen from across the box and compared with another, was commonplace, but Guy Lawrence seemed to hold a different opinion. Possibly that might be because he had never seen Helen, poor wretch!

"One would think you were preparing a sermon," pouted Miss Prentice. "Why do you look at me so? Have I been naughty?"

"Was I looking at you?—that is, I mean I'm sorry I did," blundered Gordon. "Do you know the selection they are playing?"

"Yes, indeed. I'll play it for you the first chance I get; shall I?"

"I'd like nothing better."

She looked at him through half-closed eyes.

"You don't mean that," she said, with a laugh. "You're thinking of some one else. Tell me who it is!"

"I was watching the orchestra," Gordon said coolly. "They work so hard."

"The fancy-stunt man pleases me best," she went on. "He can play anything from sandpaper to the triangle, singly or together. I'd rather see him than moving-pictures, and that is saying a good deal."

The curtain went up on as pretty a bit of sentiment as Gordon had ever seen, and he more than once wished that Helen could see it, too. He knew just the places where she would wink the hardest, and how she would pretend the light hurt her eyes after the curtain went down. At such times he never spoke to her until she looked up at him and nodded, waiting for his answering nod and smile. She always understood.

"Wasn't it too cute?" Miss Prentice was saying to Jean. "I think where she says: 'Kate, you—poor—poor—little—fool!' is perfectly darling. I wish you could have seen her in 'Carrots,' as I saw her in New York."

Gordon sat back in the box and read the advertisements in the program. Anyway, Davenport couldn't take her to the theater, minister that he was. Though, Gordon said to himself, he would go, were he a thousand times a minister, even if they had to go out of town on funny little sprees to do it. He laughed to himself.

"I didn't know the jokes were so funny," Miss Prentice cried. "Do read it to me! A new joke is such a rarity."

"There is none in the program. This one I was thinking of concerns a minister, but the joke is on me, if there is any, and I can't really see the point."

"That sounds suspicious," she said coquettishly. "Tell me about it."

"What were you saying about Sterling?" Jean's husband asked Lawrence suddenly, and Miss Prentice, noting the immediate loss of Gordon's attention, joined the conversation.

"He's the one who died a few months ago. I think I've met his daughter—handsome, but forbidding and cold."

Gordon flushed. Such a rattle-brained chatterbox!

"She's as fine a somebody as there is on the globe," Lawrence spoke up warmly; and while Gordon longed to embrace him as a man of unusual discrimination, he added, in a low voice, to the girl in front of him a satisfying, "Almost."

"I thought you were speaking of the

father," Jim said. "Did you know him?"

"Indeed I did," said Lawrence. "If there is anything about him that I don't know, I don't care to know it. How Miss Sterling belongs to him I can't understand. There's the curtain."

Possibly the remainder of the play was delightful, but Gordon was in such a fever to have a word with Lawrence that it seemed interminably long. At last, however, it was over, and they rose, with laughter and idle talk, to slip into their shimmering party-coats and don their absurd, but undeniably effective, high hats. Gordon made an effort to be gay, but his heart was not in their fun, and he felt the bitterness of contrasts very sharply. A man's honor and a girl's happiness depended on what Lawrence could tell him, and yet they walked out chatting lightly on any subject that came first to mind, laughing at nothing and each other, as gay as if no sorrow or suffering were possible.

As they were passing out they were stopped a moment by the crowd in the foyer, and Miss Prentice took the opportunity to fasten a refractory clasp of her glove. They stood at one side, and Gordon took a certain pleasure in watching the passing show, the while he wondered if he could by any chance have happened at last upon some one who knew the real truth of the Sterling mystery.

"Can you help me, do you think?" Miss Prentice's voice broke in. "I've tried and tried."

Gordon took the white-gloved hand in his obediently, and with little difficulty clasped the fasteners. It took but a moment, but just as he finished he glanced up and looked squarely into Helen's eyes. On the other side of her he saw Davenport and a strange girl, and he flushed to the temples as he bowed. For a second he was angry that Davenport's habit permitted theater-going, and then his ill-feelings turned on his own act. Why the mischief did he have the bad luck to be playing the devoted to a girl like that when Helen looked his way! He did not know but that he ought to be glad, rather than

otherwise, that Helen had seen it, though what difference it would make to her he could not cheat himself into seeing. It would never have been possible that the sight of Miss Prentice could give her the stab he felt at the sight of that everlasting Davenport. What a piece of foolishness, anyway!

"The carriage is there," he said rather brusquely. "Shall we go now?"

In the doorway Miss Prentice seized Jean by the arm and said in a low voice: "Do you know this paragon of a Miss Sterling?"

Jean shook her head wonderingly. "Never saw her."

"Well," her friend said, with a laugh, "you'd better make her acquaintance and decide whether you're going to like her."

Jean turned to ask her a question, but Jim was waiting to help her into the carriage, and she said nothing. Perhaps she could find out later.

At the hotel café where Jim had ordered their supper, the lights and music jarred on Gordon inexpressibly. He was out of tune with it all, though he had never particularly admired the gorgeous decorations that served as a marvel to country visitors the year round. The pomp and circumstance seemed tawdry and theatrical, and there appeared to be fewer nice people than usual there. Had he been Jim, he would not have chosen that place that night, but perhaps it was Miss Prentice's choice. Helen would have thought one of Jean's little suppers so much cozier. He wondered if it were not something of a strain on Jim's flat pocketbook. What, he wondered, made the difference between those who could make money and those who could not? Was it all luck? Really, he had not been as good as he might have been, and he would help out with an invitation or so.

"Rob has something on his conscience to-night," Jim laughed. "He's been worried all the evening."

"I am rather absent-minded," Gordon admitted. "I've had a hard two weeks of it, and I'm tired. I was wondering just then if you'd all go to the concert at the Auditorium with me. There isn't



She sat up and smiled wanly as he set the tray on the chair before her.

anything else in town, now that we have seen this."

"Indeed, we will. Do take some more salad," Jean urged, much gratified. "It may rest you."

How easy it was to please people, after all! Jean's happy face reproached him for the self-absorption that had made him forget everything but Helen and the problem she had entrusted to his hands.

Finally it was over, the noise, the twanging, the everlasting chatter, and they could go home. As he put on his hat he found a chance to speak to Lawrence alone.

"May I see you at the bank to-morrow after hours?"

"Not to-morrow; I've promised to go—"

"Oh, all right. Friday?"

Lawrence looked at him in surprise, wondering what was wrong, but hating to ask. Perhaps Rob was worrying that he kept so silent. After what seemed unnecessary deliberation, he answered, still puzzled:

"Why—yes, Friday. I can give you an hour or so."

Gordon nodded and hurried forward to hold open a door. Till Friday, then. What an eternity!

VII.

Lawrence had on his hat when Gordon entered the bank, for he thought Gordon's errand might possibly be brief enough to allow him to get up to Mrs. Sherman's in time for a short automom-

bile trip. Gordon, however, showed no intention of making his errand short.

"This isn't exactly a good place to talk," he said, waving his hand in the direction of the departing men and arriving scrubwomen. "It's plaguey noisy, besides. Suppose we go to Brenker's and take a private room. What do you say?"

"Why, certainly," Lawrence replied, bidding farewell mentally to his cherished hope. "But what the dickens are you going to do with me?"

"Get all I can out of you about Sterling," Gordon said, in a low voice. "You know something you can tell me."

Lawrence studied him a moment.

"What difference does it make to you? Got a claim against him?"

"I'm trying to clear him."

Gordon's originality was well known, but he did not usually let it carry him into such quixotic fancies as this. What in the mischief had struck him?

"It's an impossibility. Why not let it rest as long as he is dead, and nobody knows the difference? No one cares now whether he was a rascal or not. Take my advice and keep out of it."

"I promised to help prove him as innocent as I believe him to be. If you could see his daughter——"

"Oh! Sits the wind in that quarter?" laughed Lawrence, holding out his hand. "Congratulations, old man!"

"There's no cause for congratulation," Gordon said, his voice shaking in spite of himself. "Your good wishes are due another fellow. Will you help me in this business?"

"Gordon, you're a trump!" Lawrence cried, regretful for having even intentionally hurt him. "Help you? To be sure I will! I only wish we were more sure of results. Wait till I finish this and get my hat."

"If you have any proofs, bring them," Gordon said. "For I am exceedingly skeptical as to his guilt."

In one of Brenker's private rooms Gordon ordered cigars and a light lunch, and they sat talking of many things before they spoke of work. Then

Gordon threw away his cigar and settled down to the business nearest his thoughts.

"Now, whatever you know, Lawrence, out with it!"

"I'm so relieved," Lawrence drawled lazily. "A dark fear had seized me that I had been brought here to be held up. The privacy of this place is appalling!"

Gordon usually laughed at Lawrence's raillery, but to-night it irritated him.

"Go on! go on!" he commanded impatiently. "I'm in a hurry."

"Well, then, if you must," Lawrence said reluctantly. "Sterling sent the bank page after page of false reports, involving us in all sorts of difficulties and misrepresenting facts grossly, so that we came within an ace of losing more than we could stand. Then he cleared out for Paris, where an avenging Providence or his Nemesis laid him low. There, on that chair, are my proofs. Kill me and destroy them, if you must, but you won't gain a continental by it."

"Do be serious, Guy. I never was more in earnest in my life."

"So I perceive. It frightens me."

"Did you ever know of anything else wrong that Sterling has ever done?"

"Great Scott, no! Isn't that enough?"

"Hand over the books," Gordon said, sweeping the things from the table. "Let's get to work."

Lawrence gazed at him, puzzled for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders and reached for the papers. Whatever reason Gordon had for his insistence he realized must be good and sufficient, at least in his own eyes. To Lawrence, whose mind was made up, and, being made up, was difficult to change, it was the veriest nonsense to waste an evening so made for automobiling. Perhaps if they hurried they might finish yet, in time, and he would need no supper after Gordon's little spread.

"Which is the first?" Gordon broke in. "Explain what these abbreviations mean."

Lawrence, once roused, was as earnest as he, and the two men worked to-

gether for two hours with not an interruption except when Gordon once pushed back his chair and paced the floor, smoking furiously. The conclusive evidence of the figures was overwhelming, and Gordon's despair grew as they turned the pages and Lawrence's even, monotonous voice explained discrepancies and noted omissions without comment or remark.

As he walked up and down, without so much as a glance at Lawrence, who sat stretching his arms and yawning, he cast about in his mind for some clue, some hint, that might yet save it all, and failed to find anything but the growing certainty that Helen's father was guilty of the crime of which Bentley accused him. He threw away his cigar and sat down to work again with Lawrence, who brought his chair-legs down with a bang and glanced slyly at his watch.

It was six o'clock before Lawrence raised his head from the last sheet, and sat back, with a short laugh and a triumphant glance at Gordon, whose crazy faith had cost him so much work and lost him a delightful afternoon. Gordon did not look up, but sat hunched down despairingly in his chair, gazing at the pages before him. How could he ever go to Helen with the news that her father was a lawbreaker, a man for whom the penitentiary waited, a man whom no one could trust ever again? Why should he, of all men, have to take that terrible message to her? Loving her with his whole soul, how could he bear to crush her with this blow? What a poor, pitiful fool he had been to come home so full of life and hope and love!

He sat frowningly thinking so long that Lawrence began to grow impatient.

"Guess I'll go now," he said, rising. "That is, if you are through with me."

Gordon reached slowly out and turned the leaves, and Lawrence, glancing at him, noted a new gleam in his eye. He held two papers to the light, one in each hand, gazing feverishly at them in turn, his face flushed with an excitement newly augmented. He drew a quick, short breath and shook his shoulders sharply, and then his mood

changed. He laid the papers down with marked indifference, though his hand shook slightly, and lighted another cigar.

"Where does the falsification begin?" he asked. "Where I put that pencil?"

"Yes."

Gordon looked at him, with half-closed eyes, through the tobacco smoke, waiting a short time in order to steady his voice.

"It's written on different paper from the first part," he said. "Had you noticed it?"

Lawrence seized the paper. "By Jove, no!" he cried.

"Certainly. Hold them to the light."

"It's the water-mark! By George! A lion on this and a clover on that! Gordon, that means the very dickens to pay!"

They sat gazing at the papers a long time in stunned amazement, then Lawrence piled them up mechanically, almost reverently, at one end of the table.

"Whatever made you suspect at first?" he asked at length, in a whisper. "Where did you get your idea?"

Gordon hesitated a moment. "Mr. Sterling is not dead," he said.

"The dickens!" Lawrence's face was the picture of amazed consternation.

"He is in Europe, being kept at work, I have good reason to suspect, in order to prevent his telling something he knows. The falsification nonsense hides something, and the lie about his death, which Bentley acknowledged, was ostensibly to hide the falsification."

"Who do you think is the man, if Sterling isn't?"

"An excellent actor, whose powers failed when he tried to hide his chagrin that I should know of the matter."

"Do you know Bentley at all?"

"Enough to know his heart is not the kind to prompt him to save anybody's feelings at his own expense."

Lawrence was as excited as Gordon now, and his questions were short and sharp.

"Where is Sterling? Doesn't his daughter know?"

"He is supposed to be on an important secret mission, and she is kept in ignorance as to his whereabouts. It was a letter he wrote her that strengthened my belief in his innocence. Bentley's manner and his extreme benevolence aroused my first suspicions, which were increased by his lying about a telephone message."

"He is to sell out his interest and leave town to-morrow," Lawrence said. "Whatever we do must be done quickly. Where are his reports?"

"Miss Sterling has them in a safe," Gordon said, rising hastily. "She was speaking of fire one evening, and remarked that all his belongings are in her possession. He left in great haste. I'll get them at once."

"Can we meet here again?" Lawrence asked eagerly. "Or shall I come, too?"

"No, you can have a couple of hours to yourself," Gordon said maliciously. "Mrs. Sherman's cook makes excellent desserts. I'll be back here at half-past eight, at the latest, so mind you're here."

He was gone in another moment, and hurried out to catch the car to the distant suburban station. As ill-luck would have it, there was a delay, and he could not bear to wait upon the uncertainties of the city's rapid transit. So, when Lawrence came out in haste to reach a dress-suit and dinner, he was just in time to see Gordon's tall figure striding south with the familiar swing of the shoulders he had known so well at college.

VIII.

When Davenport dropped in and asked Helen to go over to the church with him to hear the new soloist, she was on the point of declining, but she suddenly realized that she was permitting herself to be too much of a recluse, and went. With the exception of the one evening at the theater she had been nowhere for many days, and she was beginning to feel the loss of contact with others. Gordon she had not seen for so long she wondered whether he had

forgotten her. The fall evening was chilly, so she stopped to put on a wrap, and then hurried away, leaving word with Maggie where she might be found in case any one called. By "any one" she meant one man, but, of course, Maggie was not supposed to know that. It was not that she cared specially for the soloist, but that she was restless, and must do something. To stay at home was to brood over her father's trouble and Gordon's defection, and she was too sensible to indulge in the depression it brought. Blues were physical, she had always told herself, and could be walked off, but somehow, for the first time in her life, her philosophy failed her. She must get out and see more of her kind of people and wake herself up.

A goodly number of the congregation were there in the church when she arrived, so she sank into a rear pew and waited to sit in judgment on the tenor who had asked for a hearing of his voice. He was tall and fine looking, and Helen wondered how he enjoyed being exhibited like a mahogany desk or a horse trotted forth to show its paces. It seemed to her that all the most critical parishioners were there, and she wondered how they would serve him. Mrs. Anderson, in a marvelous costume of green and pink, was there, as well as the lady in purple who had disapproved of Rob Gordon so many weeks before. She remembered how amused he had been, for they weren't making a single bit of noise, not a bit. It didn't seem possible that a man of his caliber could be fascinated by a fluttering butterfly like Amy Prentice, but there never was any choosing for people in such matters.

The tenor's voice was magnificent, but his ringing notes served only for a background for her moods, as varying as his range. She was tired, and gave herself up to thinking, with a wild feeling that nothing much mattered, after all. Davenport, seated beside her, was intent on the reason for his coming, and she felt free to shut out everything and be alone in the crowd—a miserable, heart-sick girl.

"Will you come back to the house with me at once?" a voice whispered over her shoulder. "It's extremely important."

She was not surprised to look up into Gordon's face, but she was startled at its set seriousness. She rose without a word and joined him, her heart nearly bursting with anxiety.

"Mr. Davenport will be good enough to excuse you," he said formally. "I am sorry, but it is necessary."

"Is there anything wrong?" Davenport asked. "Can I help you?"

"Thank you, no," Gordon said, trying not to be savage. "No one is needed."

Helen said nothing until they reached the street, when she laid her hand on his arm and asked the question that had at first sprung to her lips:

"Is it father?"

"Yes, but he's all right," Gordon hastened to assure her. "We are looking into his reports, and I want his copies. That's all."

"I am thankful." She drew a deep breath of relief.

He was not ready to answer, as he wished, the anxious questions he knew would follow, so he made light of the situation by turning her thoughts away for the moment.

"So am I. Helen, I haven't had a chance to speak to you about Davenport yet."

"Oh, did he tell you?" She glanced up brightly.

"I should have thought you would have told me."

"Why, Rob, I didn't suppose you cared enough!" Her face was turned from him now.

"Cared!"

"Yes. You never have liked him, you know."

"He seems to be a fine fellow. I'm very glad." How hard it was to be cordial and sincere at the same time!

"He is," she said warmly. "But personally I'd prefer to have you say nothing than to speak in such a tone."

"You can't expect me to be crazy over it!" he said scornfully.

"I didn't think you could be so bitter about any one."

"I am not the least bitter. I told him I was mighty glad, though I didn't mean it."

"I am very happy over it," Helen declared gaily. "I did it all myself, you know."

"What, the mischief!"

It did not sound like Helen, that flippant remark.

"You don't think I ought to be proud of it?" she laughed. "I'm afraid I can't influence you to like him a bit. Tell me about father's books."

He would not stay after she had found the reports for him, not even to take the cup of coffee she urged on him. If there was anything to be accomplished it must be done at once, and he must do it. Helen looked wistfully after him as he went off again, having declined to go back to the church. In the light of the street-lamp she could see him for some distance, from the library window, and she gazed after him long after he had disappeared. Then she sat down at the piano to play a waltz, noisy, galloping, headlong. When Maggie came in, an hour later, for orders, she found her young mistress with her head against the music-rack, and at first she thought she was asleep.

In the solitude of the early suburban train Gordon vowed that he would make just one more trip to Stanton, and that to return the reports and no more. He would not even go in, for he was certain he could not stand it. He might, he thought bitterly, run across Davenport again, and he knew that he should choke him. Helen, of course, had a right to marry whom she chose, but she might have saved him something of this suffering if she had so much as mentioned the minister in a letter. He would carry out his promise to clear her father, if possible, and then he would go back to Hawaii or Manila or Halifax—anywhere but Stanton again.

It was after nine when he reached

Brenker's, and Lawrence was pacing impatiently up and down at the hotel door as he approached. They made no remark, but went at once to the little officelike room, for which arrangements had been made, and settled down to work. They knew it was a task that would take them the better part of the night, and they took it up with the intent to have done as soon as might be. Lawrence draped his evening coat over a chair and removed his collar and tie, but Gordon had not a thought for anything but the work before him. The first glance showed him differences in the reports as Helen had them and those that had been sent to the bank, and his heart bounded with delight to think of what he might tell Helen on the morrow. The only question now to find out was the extent of the fraud, the only necessity that of obtaining facts and figures to serve as proofs for charges he should make.

About midnight they rested, and ate ravenously a supper of coffee and rolls. Lawrence was beginning to show signs of weariness, and his early hilarity had disappeared, but he would not stop taking notes, even at Gordon's insistent wish. He must substantiate their suspicions of Bentley, and he did not intend to leave all the glory to Gordon. Finally, however, just before dawn, Gordon laid down his pen and silently folded the papers and closed the books, too worn out to comment on the night's discoveries and almost too sleepy to care. Then they allowed themselves an hour's sleep, Lawrence on the bony couch and Gordon on two chairs, because the first train for Stanton, where Bentley lived, did not leave until half-past five.

The night clerk looked at them somewhat amused as Gordon paid the reckoning, for they were a disheveled pair, and Lawrence's evening dress was somewhat out of place in the garish light of day, but he was puzzled as well, for they quite evidently had been at work, as the books testified, and neither was intoxicated.

They found the little station deserted when they reached it, and their train

late, but in time they were fairly started for Stanton. Lawrence went to sleep on the local's dusty plush in utter disregard of his fine feathers, but Gordon sat by the window and gazed out at the little truck-gardens as they crawled by, glad he had been of use to Helen, but heart-sick to think of the loss he must face in a few hours. He had not changed his mind about telling Helen, though he looked at things in a new light now, for since she was to marry another fellow it was not like claiming a reward for his services. Other, better, fellows had won defeat in love, but why should he have to be denied the joy of claiming Helen as his wife? The humble rôle was not his by nature, and he rebelled against defeat with all the strength of his sore heart and weary body. He had lived on the hope so long, so long!

IX.

The astonished butler showed the two men into the morning-room, with a glance of interrogation at Lawrence's unseasonable costume and a muttered doubt as to Mr. Bentley's seeing any one at such a heathenish hour. When he left them alone they took rapid and earnest note of the luxurious furnishings and nodded to each other their wonderings as to his reception of their errand. Gordon was prepared for a terrible scene, and expected Bentley to storm back and forth on the polished floor, protesting his innocence to high Heaven and any one who might be near enough to overhear. In thinking it over, Gordon wondered whether, after all, he had done the wisest thing in coming directly to this house without consulting Helen as to what was best to do. His desire to save her had perhaps made him too hasty.

The butler, returning, announced coldly that Mr. Bentley begged to be excused, as he was not yet up, and was to leave at ten for New York. To rise and dress would no doubt take too much of the gentlemen's valuable time.

"Time is nothing to us. We have all

the time there is," Lawrence said, yawning. "Tell him to come down informally just as he is."

"Tell Mr. Bentley, please," Gordon said quietly, "that we shall wait here till it is his good pleasure to come down."

The man vanished, and Gordon signalled to Lawrence a fear that the delay might be indefinitely prolonged. Lawrence cast a despairing glance over his suit and motioned to the sunshine flooding the room and laughed nervously. His laughter increased as he looked at Gordon, but he hushed it noisily and explosively as the butler's step was heard again in the hall.

"Mr. Bentley says, gentlemen," the butler repeated with a half-smothered yawn, "he will not be down at all"

"Kindly repeat to Mr. Bentley," Gordon said patiently, "that if that is the case, we shall not leave at all."

After the disappearance of the man the moments passed very slowly. They were little inclined to talk of anything but their errand, and this they feared to refer to in the most distant manner in this house. So they gazed at the paintings, the Oriental rugs, and the ornate furnishings, wondering how much the owner's tastes were represented in it all, and for how much his family was responsible for the very evident costliness. Gordon, wandering about the room on a tour of inspection, decided it was the result of the clashing tastes of the city decorator and Mr. Bentley himself, and amused his restless mood by trying to imagine what Jean or Helen or his mother could have made out of its barbaric splendor.

A footfall in the doorway made him turn about, to face Mr. Bentley himself, smiling, complacent, and spotless, the perfect picture of an American business man in the negligée of his morning robe and slippers.

"I beg pardon, gentlemen, for keeping you waiting," he said. "Pray be seated. This is rather early for me, and I was not on dress-parade. Possibly the younger generation keeps earlier hours."

"This is, on the contrary, late hours

for us," Gordon said dryly. "We have not been to bed."

"Aha!" Bentley laughed. "Been making a night of it, eh? Lawrence, I see, is still toggled out. Was it at the Gaiety?"

"No, at Brenker's."

The early morning joviality sat ill on Bentley, and jarred on Gordon's already overstrained nerves.

"Do tell me about it. Pray be seated, Gordon."

"Thank you, no." Gordon's voice was hard, for it was all he could do to keep from throttling the man before him, and he was holding himself in with a tight rein.

"A habit of yours, this standing? Very becoming to your figure, as you are probably aware. Well, what were you up to?"

"Comparing two sets of reports, Mr. Bentley," Gordon said deliberately. "And making notes of the contents."

Bentley put out his hand to ring the bell, but Gordon stepped between his hand and the cord, and he sank back in his seat. It was merely a spasmodic, involuntary motion which Bentley regretted immediately.

"I was just going to ring for cigars," he said nervously. "But it shall be as you wish."

"It certainly shall," Gordon said. "Shall I close the door before I go on?"

His courteous consideration was terrible in its irony.

"My family is out of town, and there's no one to listen. Go ahead."

He was very white, but showed no other sign that he suspected what was coming, and Gordon was seized with marvel at the nerve of the man. His mood softened a little.

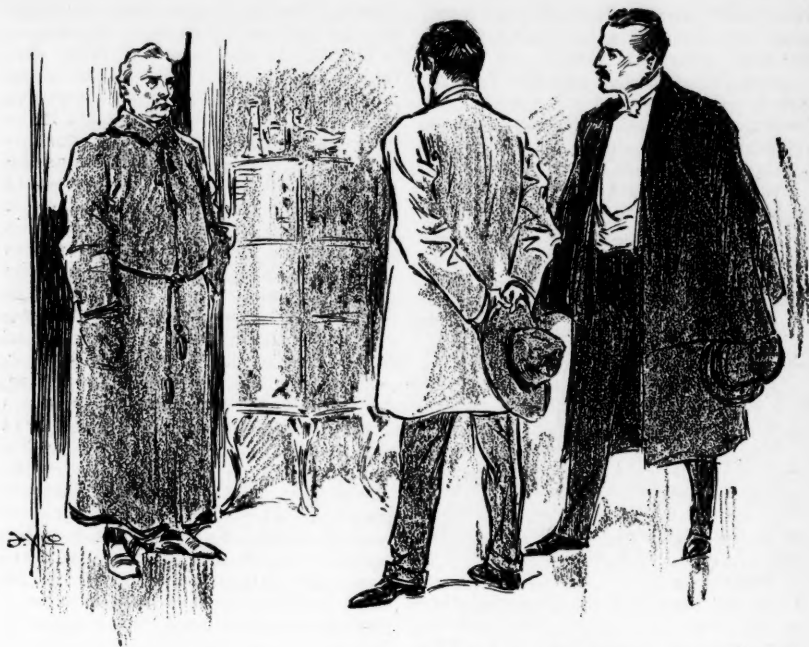
"Why did you do it, Mr. Bentley?" he asked. "What did you get out of it?"

"I don't understand what you are driving at." It was the last throw, the instinct for pretense up to the end.

"You know perfectly well," Lawrence spoke up. "That's why I'm mixed up in it at all."

"I have indisputable proof that you

THE RED BARN



"Aha!" Bentley laughed. "Been making a night of it, eh?"

did yourself what you accuse Sterling of doing," Gordon went on. "And I ask, why?"

Bentley studied him with shifting eyes and decided swiftly that subterfuge and denial would no longer serve under those keen, sharp glances.

"What won't a man do for money?" he asked doggedly. "I had to have money."

"But you are worth a cool million."

Bentley shook his head. "Not now," he said, in a low voice. "Not now."

"What in the world——" began Lawrence impetuously, but stopped when Gordon held up his hand.

Gordon would leave none of the bitter dregs untasted; Bentley must realize his offense to the uttermost.

"You took the money, let the blame fall on Sterling, whom you kept in Europe against his will——"

"That's not so," Bentley said des-

perately. "He doesn't know I've given him personal work just to keep him there. His salary is continuing all the time."

"That's what I wanted to know. Sterling was the only one who knew what the real report was, and it was to your interest to keep him out of the country. Then you put that abominable notice in the paper to cover your tracks, and caused the failure of the company. To-day you intended to sell your interest and leave for some other place. Am I right? I know I am."

Bentley writhed under the indictment, but when Gordon ended he returned suddenly to his former gaiety.

"What if you are?" he asked. "Isn't it what any other man would have done? Sterling himself, for instance?"

"No!" Gordon's face reddened with contemptuous anger.

"It's a penitentiary offense," Law-

rence said thoughtfully. "Aside from being cowardly and dishonorable, and a few other things like that."

Bentley acknowledged the remark with a bow.

"What do you wish me to do, gentlemen?" he asked. "Have you a sheriff in waiting?"

"What shall be done later is for Miss Sterling to say," Gordon said gravely. "Just now I must have your word of honor not to go out of your door till I can bring a message from her."

"You flatter me," Bentley said. "I had not expected such a concession after the remarks of Mr. Lawrence. I give you my word of all that is left of my honor that I shall not step out of the house until I hear from you. Is there anything else?"

"Cable your brother at once to send Mr. Sterling home, salary and expenses paid, on the next steamer," Gordon said. "Have you a messenger-call?"

"Behind the door."

Gordon rang for the boy, and they sat in silence awaiting his coming. Neither of the young men ever forgot the scene as it was impressed on their minds during those twenty lagging minutes. The sun was fully up, and its yellow beams shone with a strange, unreal light over the Oriental splendor that might have appeared tawdry in dim evening shades. Lawrence, in his discomfort, was beginning to be restless, and yet he noted with very little less intensity than Gordon the solemn ticking of the grandfather's clock and the hideous persistent grinning of the Japanese mask just over it.

Bentley, staring straight ahead at the claw of the table leg, made no sign of his feeling, but the color had left even his lips, and his eyes stood out against his pallor with terrible effect. It came over Gordon suddenly what it all meant to Bentley, but he felt no promptings of sympathy, nothing but a cold contempt for the man who had caused Helen Sterling so much suffering and had not the grace to be sorry for it. Even now he had no doubt

Bentley, in his stupor, was thinking only of the consequences to himself.

The boy came, and Lawrence admitted him without letting him ring. He stared at the three men curiously, noting the evening dress and the lounging robe, and drew his own conclusions rapidly. Such scenes were as the breath of life to him. Bentley wrote out the cable from a small cipher-book in his desk, Gordon watching over his shoulder the while, to all appearances as calm as though he were signing the grocer's monthly check. The boy went out somewhat subdued by the atmosphere of calamity, and Gordon turned to the door, his hat in his hand.

"I think you do not fully realize, Mr. Bentley," he said, "how much misery and useless suffering you have caused Miss Sterling. Her health has broken down so completely under the strain that her merest acquaintances notice it. If you have found pleasure enough in the despicable act to make up for this, since you have not manhood enough to regret it, you must, indeed, have had dire need of the money."

Bentley made no reply for a moment, his white lips twitching nervously as Gordon finished, but at the door he spoke painfully.

"It was for my boys, gentlemen; believe me, it was for my boys," he stammered. "The acts of youth are ever hasty, and the judgments harsh, but I hope you will sometimes think of what I say, hereafter. Temptation is terrible. Gentlemen, you have been considerate, and I thank you. Good-by."

Lawrence replied to the farewell, but Gordon appeared not to hear, striding off down the walk, hot with anger and burning with helpless indignation. A flickering smile passed over Bentley's face. "Have you your gloves, Mr. Gordon?" he asked. "Yes? Good-by."

When they had gone some distance Gordon looked back, and was startled to see how old and stooped was the figure in the heavy doorway. He seemed so frail standing there with the breeze lifting his thin, white hair, so pitifully alone and entirely deserted. After all, perhaps he had been too hard, with the

relentless justice of a youth that has never been tempted. Perhaps if he went back now he could shake hands with him, and take away a little of the sting. He took a step toward him, but even as he did so the strange old figure vanished, and the noise of the closing door echoed through the quiet street.

X.

"Sure, just ate a bite o' breakfast, darlin'. Ye's as white an' thin as a shate o' paper."

"I'm not hungry, Maggie, thank you," Helen said, smiling from her pillow at the kindly intruder. "I'm only lazy."

Oh, if she could only hear what had been found in those books—if she only knew!

"Sure, an' it ain't lazy you are." Maggie retorted, setting the tray on the bed. "See how fine a mornin' 'tis fixin' to be, and sit up an' enjoy it. Ate a bit o' toast an' a swally o' coffee, now."

Helen looked at the tray and sighed inwardly. She could not tolerate scraped toast, and coffee spilled in the saucer was an abomination, but she could not disappoint the kindly woman, and forced herself to eat and drink as best she could. Maggie stirred about the room pretending to be busy, but she had sympathy of which she must unburden herself, and she could not wait overlong.

"It's gr'avin' you are," she burst out, at length. "It ain't for the likes of a girl like you to be after gettin' thin."

"I'm perfectly well, Maggie, thank you."

"Sure, I know that as well as the nixt felly, but you've somewhat on your mind, all right, all right."

Helen made no answer.

"If your feyther ain't dead, why ain't he after comin' back to you? If he could wance lay eyes on yer pritty face all worrited up so, he'd come back like graced lightning."

"He's busy abroad, Maggie."

"That's the auld country, ain't it?

I'm goin' back, too, wan o' these days. An' why don't he write, then?"

"He has written."

"Well, maybe," she conceded grudgingly. Then she became craftily diplomatic. "What's become av the minister these days? Sure, till last night he ain't been here for miny days."

"He's busy, too, I suppose."

"And the short, fat gentleman that waddles?"

"I don't know."

"Sure yer too much alone, arrah! An' the tall, foine gentleman, is he busy, too, now?"

"Maggie!"

"Sure an' I ax your pardon, ma'am, but he's so kind about askin' after Moike. It might be he's gone away?"

"I don't know who you're talking about, Maggie. Please take the tray."

Maggie, silenced for the moment, took the tray, but at the door she turned about somewhat wistfully.

"Now, Miss Hilin," she said, "both on us is wimmen folks, an' there ain't so much difference, after all. It's just that you say you're goin' abroad, an' I say it's the auld country."

Helen relieved her feelings by thumping the pillow as soon as Maggie left, and then lay listening to the woman's heavy footsteps on the bare backstairs. What a good old soul she was, in spite of her seeming impertinence! Helen recalled her many kindly ministrations gratefully as she lay wondering whether it were worth while to rise. She was really too tired to move. She had lain awake so much of the night, worrying and wondering, that she was completely exhausted. The gloom of the darkness had made it seem so possible that he might have done it—but, oh, how could he?

The telephone-bell rang insistently and noisily, and she could hear Maggie toiling in from the kitchen to answer it. Helen could tell when she passed from hard wood to rug, or rug to hard wood, and it amused her to picture the progress.

"Hillo!" came Maggie's voice up the stair-well. "Hillo! It's me. Yis, sor, Maggie. Sor? Spake up, plase. Yis,

sor, sure! The sooner the quicker! Good-by."

"Maggie!"

"Comin'!" called Maggie's jubilant voice, and almost before Helen imagined it possible Maggie appeared in the doorway.

"The saints be praised!" she cried breathlessly.

"What on earth is the matter?"

"Sure, it's the tall, foine wan!"

Helen sat up suddenly. "Maggie?"

"Sure. Him with the eyes. He's comin' in half an hour. That's right, joomp out!"

"What did he say?" Helen cried, flying around desperately, looking for a hair-brush. "Why on earth didn't you call me and let me answer it myself?"

"Saints have mercy!" Maggie cried suddenly. "I clane forgot my cake, and you'll be after wantin' it to-day!"

She hurried away, and Helen went on dressing hastily, though somewhat ashamed of her rushing. She would be very dignified with him, and show him how little it mattered if he did choose to be nice one day and horrid the next. What on earth made him select half-past eight for a call? Why should she care when he had told her himself that he was in love with another girl? She was trying to put the right shoe on the left foot when she thought of that possibility, and the discovery of what she was attempting to do made her cross with herself. She had certainly failed to be cool last night.

Then suddenly, remorsefully, she remembered her father, and a dreadful fear overcame her that he might have bad news. Oh, if she had only gone to the telephone herself! Then she might have told from the tone of his voice something of his errand. Perhaps he would have told her. What could they have found in those reports? Was it an end to all worry, or just the beginning of new? They would sell the piano and the best things, and she would work and they could pay it back. But, no, it wasn't, it could not be, true!

Her hands moved very slowly as she wondered over it all, and she fell to dreaming now and then, so the bell rang

before she was ready. He was ten minutes early. People were not usually early with bad news, were they? Didn't they put it off as long as they could?

Maggie made a détour on her way to the door, up the back stairs, and down the front, to give her more time, and as she passed Helen's room she put her head in at the door, and smiled reassuringly.

"Yer lookin' foine, Miss Hilin," she said. "Wear the pink gownd, won't you, darlin'?"

XI.

As Gordon came down Main Street from the restaurant and turned in at Crescent Place, a sportive breeze whirled his hat from his head and bowled it down the road at a pace too rapid for him to hope to equal, burdened as he was with books and papers. He stood looking despairingly after it, and saw a man run forward from a side street and seize it as it passed. He was glad to have his property rescued in so timely a manner, but he felt anything but pleasure when he recognized the person who held out his hat to him. Was he never to come to Crescent Place without meeting that everlasting man? He thanked him with a light remark about the wind, but it was not until he had turned away that he noticed Davenport's face. He was very white, and looked as though he were fresh from some trouble. Gordon forgot his dislike, and turned back.

"There's something wrong?" he asked. "Can I help you?"

"It's Mr. Bentley," Davenport said, clearing his throat. "Somehow I—I can't get used to such things."

"Bentley? What?" Could it be possible the news had spread so quickly?

"The servant telephoned me at once, and I have been there for an hour. He died at a little after seven."

"Died? I've just seen him!" Gordon cried, in horrified protest. "It must have been very sudden; terribly sudden."

"Sudden?" Davenport said, with a shiver. "God help us, yes. He shot himself early this morning."

He wondered if Gordon felt, too, how young he was; how pitifully young and incompetent to explain or excuse so many of the terrible tragedies he knew of every day. Gordon gazed at him in silence for a moment as many thoughts raced through his brain, and his face grew almost as white as Davenport's.

Of course he and Lawrence were the cause of the suicide. Bentley could not stand the disclosures he must have felt sure they would make, and, to such a man, such an end was the only way out. His tangled web, woven through months of time, had so quickly been the means of his undoing!

"The butler told me two men had been there," Davenport was saying. "What happened?"

"Bentley was involved in his business affairs," Gordon said slowly. "So Lawrence and I went to interview him. We are, so far, the only ones who know it, and we shall not spread the news—now."

"I am relieved," Davenport said. "For a time I feared foul play. The butler is so nervous he is like an old woman. I have telegrams to send, and I must go on. Gordon"—he paused and drew a deep breath—"Gordon, it was horrible—horrible beyond words!"

With this news fresh in his mind, Gordon waited for Helen in the sunny library where he had roasted apples so long before. He would not seat himself, but stood at the window looking out at the trees and the street. How suddenly bad news changed a scene! He had felt the gaiety of the summer morning, relieved as he was of a disagreeable errand, before he had met Davenport, but now with this vision in his mind it seemed to him he had never seen the world so glaringly brazen. His face was still white and drawn when he turned around at Helen's step.

"I was very slow," she said gaily, raising her eyes to his face. "Oh, Rob, what has happened? Father?"

"Your father sails to-morrow for home," Gordon said quickly. "No, it isn't that."

"Father's coming!" she cried rapturously. "And—and is it all right?"

"Yes, thank God!"

"I am so glad, so thankful!" she cried joyously, her face flushing. "It has been such an eternity, and now—now it is over!"

An eternity! What might not that man know of eternity now?

"I can't wait! I can't wait!" cried Helen. "It seems—Rob, why do you look so sorrowful?"

Gordon walked over to the fireplace, with his back to the light, and stood with his elbow on the mantel. Should he tell her and cloud that happy face with horror?

"Guy Lawrence and I interviewed Mr. Bentley about half-past six this morning," he said slowly. "We had those reports, and some that Lawrence had, and we cornered him fairly. He did not attempt to deny that he had done himself what he said your father did, and I told him his punishment lay in your hands."

"Oh, but I couldn't!" she cried, aghast. "I am the only one who has suffered, and I couldn't disgrace anybody. Of course he must understand that!"

Gordon looked down at her as she sat in the big armchair, and was glad that he was sufficiently in the shadow to hide the expression on his face.

"Don't you see how it is?" she asked earnestly. "Think how terrible to pull down his honor so, Rob. Think of his wife, how awful for her to find such things true of the man she gloried in!"

"Is that how you'd feel toward your husband?" he asked bitterly.

"Yes," she said simply. "I could not help it."

Gordon groaned.

"But, Rob, if that were all you would be glad and you're not. What else have you to tell me?"

"Nothing more about your father. He knows nothing about it all, and you will have to tell him when he comes home. The announcement must be

made in the paper that the news of his death was not correct. What can we do to give him the rousing welcome he deserves?"

His voice was unnaturally calm, and he gripped the mantel with one hand to steady himself and keep it so. But Helen surprised him by rising and looking at him with all the dignity of her full height.

"Rob Gordon!" she cried impatiently. "What are you keeping from me?"

Then he told her as gently as he could that the man who had caused her so much sorrow was dead by his own hand as a result of their early morning visit. She stood for a moment stunned, and then she spoke, her eyes full of tears.

"How perfectly terrible!" she cried. "Think of what he must have suffered before he could do that!"

She looked up at him with horrified eyes, and then sudden sympathy seized her, and she laid her hand on his arm.

"You mustn't worry over it, Rob. You had to do it, and it might have come out even if you had not gone there. Please don't worry. I've given you so much trouble, and you're all tired out."

It was perilously sweet to have her care!

"You didn't go to bed last night!" she cried. "Did you work all night on this?"

"We had to. Mr. Bentley was to leave town to-day."

Helen gazed into the fire for a long minute. "He took a long, long journey," she said sadly. "Who told you?"

"Davenport. And that's another thing I want to speak to you about," he said, mindful of his resolution not to stay. "I'm sorry I ever said I dislike him, for I don't."

"I'm not going to say I like Miss Prentice," she said stubbornly from her easy chair. "For it wouldn't be true."

"She hasn't anything to do with it," Gordon said witheringly. "So why drag her in?"

"Father's coming home!" she cried abruptly, disdaining explanation. "I can scarcely believe it!"

"I've talked about your father and Davenport long enough," he said grimly, though his voice was husky. "I worked to clear your father, and I've learned to like Davenport, and now I've reached the red barn."

She glanced at him quickly, then her eyes fell, and she played with the tassel on the chair-arm.

"It's a big barn," he went on. "And it's empty and dreary and forlorn. I am sure you can hear footsteps echoing in it all the time, for it is haunted with memories. It is a dreary, dreary place for me. I came all the way from Honolulu to take the city office so that I could be near you, and this is all the good it does me!"

"You don't like Stanton, then? Or is it me?"

"Don't joke, Helen. It's terribly serious with me, and I can't stand it. I think I have at last earned the right to make you listen to me."

"But why take it so to heart? Mr. Davenport seems to be quite happy, and I know a girl who is glad, glad, glad she's in love!"

"Davenport? It's always Davenport! Of course he's happy. So would I be, under the same circumstances."

Helen's face went very white. "I reckon I did not understand you," she faltered. "Is it Miss Williams you're in—in love with?"

"Who's she?"

"Mr. Davenport's fiancée. The girl that makes you wish you were he."

He looked at her in stunned amazement.

"Davenport? Then it isn't you?"

"Me? Indeed, no." She laughed, the color coming back to her face with a rush. "Where did you get that idea?"

"It isn't you!" he cried crazily. "It isn't you!"

"No, it isn't!" she cried, rising suddenly. "Rob Gordon, you're the queerest man I ever knew! Why don't you look inside the barn?"

"Helen!" he cried, as a light broke over him. "You don't mean you—?"

"Yes, Rob," she laughed softly. "I'm afraid I do!"



ROOSEVELT
vs.
THE RAILROAD
PRESIDENTS
BY
CHARLES H.
COCHRANE

FOR nearly half a century this country has been run by the railroads; now it begins to look as if the country was going to turn about, under the leadership of our energetic and forceful President, and run the railroads. For months past the captains of the great railways have been trying to find out where they are, and what may be expected from Washington. Harriman, Morgan, Stickney, Yoakum, Mellen, and Speyer all visited the capital, to confer with the President, during March last. Other railway officials apparently wished to do so, but were afraid. The old airs of defiance of public opinion have fled with the old pasteboard passes. Harriman, Morgan, Mellen, Stickney, even Hill have promised to be good, and obey the law. Harriman, the silent man, who juggles with hundreds of millions, and acts for the multimillionaire crowd, no longer disdains the cheerful reporter who asks, in the name of the people and press, what is going on. He has become the most garrulous of all railway magnates, and is anxious to tell the public all about the railways, and how the welfare of the nation depends on giving them a fair chance to do business.

What has wrought this wondrous change?

Railways Need the Money.

The great railway systems of the United States are now in the market trying to borrow money to the total of over one billion dollars. The money is needed to increase their trackage and rolling-stock, and to enable them to handle new business in increased volume. Though prosperous, they have not the money to make the improvements, because their treasuries have been gutted by high finance. The multimillionaires who have been reaping tremendous harvests by consolidations, and stock-watering and bonding have impoverished the roads, and now turn to the public, asking for swollen loans, and are surprised to find that the public does not respond cordially as of yore.

The Pennsylvania Railroad alone has raised \$550,000,000 in the past five years, and is calling for more. The St. Paul road wants to borrow \$100,000,000; the Northern Pacific \$95,000,000; the Great Northern \$60,000,000; the New York Central \$50,000,000; while the New York, New Haven & Hartford will be satisfied with \$25,000,000, and the Southern with only \$15,000,000 for the present. Actually, there is not a single great railway in the land but



E. H. HARRIMAN

promotion, the active managers of the properties would have been able five years ago (when they saw that business was growing beyond their ability to handle) to buy freight-cars for \$800 that to-day cost \$1,300, and to buy rails at \$21 instead of \$29.

If they had borrowed then for such improvements they could have had the money at four per cent., which is not now forthcoming at six per cent.

Presidential View of the Situation.

That the President believes the present condition of the railways is due to their reckless mismanagement is apparent in many ways. It is noticeable that when Mr. Roosevelt wants the public to know just what he thinks on a subject, but perhaps does not care to say, some close personal friend is apt to rush into print, and that the President never rebukes such personal friend for his plain speech. One of these friends (Doctor Albert Shaw) recently wrote:

A set of individuals have juggled with securities, have played the stock-market up and down, have done tricks with their dividend policies, have so falsified their book-keeping as to conceal surpluses, and have virtually confiscated the property of the confiding stockholders by the use they have

is face to face with the necessity for making great and radical improvements, and wants millions to carry them through.

Had these railways kept in their treasuries the vast sums that have been diverted by high finance and



GEORGE GOULD

made of the proxies which they themselves have solicited through the mails at the stockholders' expense. The bigger element of railroad men, it is often now asserted, instead of attending to the practical business for which the stockholders are supposed to be paying them their salaries, are to be found in Wall Street and in the large New York hotels, building up their private fortunes by day and pursuing their pleasures by night.

The smaller fry of railroad officials have been the holders of stocks in coal companies, grain-elevator companies, and other enterprises along the line, and it would be absurd to deny that, as the prevailing rule, such companies and enterprises have been favored with a supply of freight-cars and other facilities for doing business, when their competitors and the general public have been denied. When things like this have been alleged against railroad officials, they have turned their eyes to heaven with protestations against the injustice of such slanderous accusations. But a moderate amount of energetic effort on the part of the government investigators brings these things to light.

There can be no doubt that Doctor Shaw here speaks the sentiments of the President as well as his own, for they are so intimate that they often breakfast together, and discuss public affairs across the table.

Another hint as to the President's attitude is the publication of Judge Farrar's letter on Federal control of railways, which is sent out "with the President's permission, and at his request." The judge suggests that the railways be controlled as post roads, in the same



W. H. MOORE

way as post-offices. In order to make the plan practical, he would have the existing railway corporations become Federal corporations, and assign the titles of their rights of way to the United States Government as "post roads," ta-



CHARLES S. MELLEN

king in return a lease in perpetuity for the use "under the conditions and limitations of the Federal statutes." This idea is an old one, and it was advocated in this magazine by the writer more than a year ago. Judge Farrar's contribution is of value in pointing out an easy legal way in which the change can be brought about, and the President's quasi indorsement evidently arises from his wanting to know the public mind as to the desirability of this method of controlling the railways.

If more evidence of the President's views were wanting it could be found in his public utterances. In his message to Congress last December he says of railway conditions:

There will ultimately be need of enlarging the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission along several different lines, so as to give it a larger and more efficient control over the railroads. . . . In some method, whether by a national license law or in other fashion, we must exercise, and that at an early date, a far more complete control than at present over these great corporations.

The best way to avert the very undesirable move for the governmental ownership of railways is to secure by the government on behalf of the people as a whole such adequate control and regulation of the great interstate common carriers as will do away with the evils which gave rise to the agitation against them.

But actions speak louder than



W. K. VANDERBILT

words. The railroad presidents never would have cared what the President said, so long as he did not make direct moves against them. The successful action taken against the Northern Securities merger, through Attorney-

general Knox, and the passage of the railway-rate bill, so strongly urged by Mr. Roosevelt, opened their eyes to the fact that here was a power that they could neither buy nor circumvent. First they fought and threat-



JAMES MCGREE

ened, then they grumbled and growled, and now they give in like lambs, confessing themselves beaten.



J. P. MORGAN

Wall Street Mismanagement Must Cease.

Who are the men that have been running our railroads, and where have they expended their time and energies? They are all known as Wall Street multimillionaires, and they consider the business management of the roads only when there is nothing doing in the stock-market. Rockefeller, Rogers Harriman, Gould, Morgan, Moore, Ryan, and Belmont own about half the railways of the country; yet what do they know or care about railroading as a business? Hill and the Vanderbilts must be credited with a wide knowledge of the practical side of railway affairs; but if Hill had spent all his time running his Northern Pacific and Great Northern on business principles, instead of trying to get rich quickly off security mergers, these stocks would not have tumbled so in the March panic, and his pet roads would not now be crying for \$150,000,000 for repairs; and if the Vanderbilts had been wide awake to the public's needs it would not have required a disastrous tunnel accident to bring about the terminal improvements in New York, nor would it have been possible for the first elec-



JAMES J. HILL

SMITH'S MAGAZINE



FERRY BELMONT



JAMES T. SPEYER



THOMAS F. RYAN

tric train they operated with two locomotives to have left the tracks in the Bronx and strewn the line with dead and dying.

It is high time that all these railroad magnates with Wall Street affiliations resigned their jobs, and that practical men like McCrea, now in charge of the Pennsylvania, and Fish, whom Harri-man dropped from the Illinois Central, were installed, to run the railways as great commercial and industrial enterprises should be run.

Murder by Carelessness.

Inattention to business is the real cause of the awful record of railway casualties that has been made by American roads in the last few years. It is a fearful outrage that the incompetence and greed of a few men should make it possible to operate our roads so carelessly that we kill fifty where European roads kill one! Every two and a half miles of track in the country saw a victim maimed last year, and every twenty-three miles of road was guilty of murder. I may as well use the right word, for it is nothing else.

The utter disregard of repeated and continued wrecks and slaughter, the failure to provide adequate mechanisms for protecting trains from accidents, the overworking of employees, inviting fatal blunders, the general negligence of everything but working the stock end of the business, constitute a worse charge against railway magnates than that of neglecting to provide sinking-funds for rebuilding as present trackage and rolling-stock wear out, or become useless

through the providing of better mechanisms and constructions.

In their reckless haste to pile up millions by the hundred these manipulators of high finance have allowed the railway-trains to descend to the level of modern juggernauts, killing and maiming with utter indifference to human life. While practically every mile of English railway is protected by a block system of signaling, less than a fourth of the trackage of American railways is provided with this simple and necessary precaution. Fast trains are run on slow and tortuous road-beds, without any effort to learn whether they can make the required speed with safety, and when a train flies off a curve, it transpires that nobody knows what was the train's speed, or how fast it was safe to run at that curve. The engineer had simply been told to make such a schedule, and he tried to do it, incidentally killing half a train-load.

Reaping the Whirlwind.

The time when the public will be satisfied with arresting the poor engineer in such a case has gone by. The people know now where lies the blame, and they have an animus against railroads in general and railway magnates in particular. This animus has shown itself recently in the action of the Nebraska, South Carolina, and some twenty-six other State legislatures, tending to restrict the railways and cut the passenger rates. Astute politicians had discovered that it would pay better to stand as the champion of the people against the railway interests, and that

public sentiment was against the railroads. Two-cent fare bills became common, and in a little while the railway magnates awoke to the fact that State regulation was likely to be much worse than national regulation of railroads, and they began to turn to the Interstate Commerce Commission, and commenced to flock to Washington to try and interview the President.

Hill Sees the President.

James J. Hill was the first of the magnates to ask an interview with President Roosevelt. He went to Washington months ago, to "talk things over." If reports are true, his interview was funny in the extreme. Mr. Hill is a man of energy, singularly like the President in his forceful and direct methods. He objected to President Roosevelt's course in the matter of the dissolution of the Northern Securities merger, and he told him what he thought of it. All know how positive are Mr. Roosevelt's ideas, and many know the strenuous way in which he hurls them at an opponent.

From the accounts that have leaked out about this remarkable interview, it appears that after the first minute Mr. Hill and the President both talked practically at the same time, in the most forceful manner, neither paying any particular attention to what the other was saying, being so hopelessly far apart in their views that agreement on anything was impossible. After nearly half an hour of this they separated, neither in any very lamblike frame of mind, though Mr. Hill was the most perturbed.

A gentleman who talked with the President shortly after the interview, and who saw Mr. Hill later the same day, is reported by a Washington correspondent to have asked the latter about the interview. Mr. Hill is re-

ported to have said: "Why, the President is crazy, clear crazy on railroad matters." The gentleman, according to the correspondent, replied: "How singular! That is exactly what the President says of you!"

Harriman Talks Freely.

Of course, these conferences are private, and the above is only Washington gossip. Interesting as it is, it would be vastly more so if a full stenographic report of all the interview and all the after-talk could be put into print. That may not be, however. The public knows that Mr.



T. P. SHONTS

Harriman must have talked differently with the President. Mr. Harriman is more of a diplomat than Mr. Hill. He is for putting the best front on everything. He now opens his heart to the public, and wants to talk publicly about railway affairs. In a recent interview he is quoted as saying:

I said in Washington, and I say now, that there has got to be cooperation on the part of the railroads on the one hand and the public and the government on the other. It is the only way in which the matter can be worked out.

We have tried the other methods. We have left it to our lawyers to take care of legislation by whatever means might be the most effective, and to our subordinates to explain things to the general public. It won't do. We have produced a flood of legislation throughout the country, some of it of doubtful purpose and some the result of misdirected zeal inspired by the national administration, and if we are ever going to extricate the railroads we have got to come out in the open and tell the people the railroads' side of the matter.

Stickney Wants Government Control.

President A. B. Stickney, of the Chicago Great Western Railway, who visited the President during March, recently told a Washington correspondent that if the railway agitation were kept



JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

up all the roads would be threatened with bankruptcy, and that by 1909 hundreds of thousands of men would be thrown out of employment. He said further:

The great unrest in the financial world is not due to the policy of President Roosevelt, but is brought about by hostile legislation by the various State legislatures. The only solution of the railroad problem is to grant all the power to regulate the roads to the Federal Government.

Shonts Speaks for Ryan-Belmont Interests.

President Shonts, of the Interborough-Metropolitan Railway, recently spoke as follows on the railway situation:

No doubt that in building up these properties things have been done which, though legally right, were morally wrong, but, because they were legally right and cannot be legally disturbed, what is the use of exploiting them?

More Harriman Gossip.

Last year a reportorial interview with E. H. Harriman, the man who dominates twenty-five thousand miles of railways, would have been worth at least a dollar a word to the clever fellow that could induce him to talk. To-day Harriman interviews are so easy to get that they command only cent-a-word rates. He seems to be talking almost too much for his own good, for some of the things he says hardly look well when paralleled. In a banquet speech last November before the Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress he said, partially in answer to remarks by Secretary Root about government railway control, that he had hoped more power would be given the railways rather than the government, because if a railroad always had to turn to a government department to know whether it might or might not do this or that, its business would be seriously hampered. The hostile action of State legislatures since November seems to have brought about a great change in Mr. Harriman's mind,

for in March he was a warm advocate of government control, saying:

The President started the movement for traffic-distribution agreements on the part of the government in his message last December, when he declared that railroads should be allowed to make agreements under certain conditions. I believe that he realizes the necessity for something of this kind, if the railroads are going to practise anything like the economies that the present situation demands; and it is right here that the railroads need the cooperation of the government.

A Change of Heart.

To sum up the situation, it appears that the railroads have experienced what revivalists would call a change of heart. They had become so used to running the country, and owning the legislatures, and having their representatives in Congress that they thought things were always to be thus. No President ever disturbed them before, except Cleveland, with his advocacy of interstate commerce, and insistence that the short haul should not cost more than the long haul. They agreed on paper to this regulation, but in private disregarded the law, and came to look upon the Interstate Commerce Commission as a lot of old fossils whose sole duty was to compile long reports that nobody ever read.

Hence the great shock to the railway magnates when President Roosevelt turned the tables on them. First they ignored him; but when a bunch of railways had been fined for rebating they began to take notice. When the President forced a railway-rate bill on Congress they opposed it so effectually that it was emasculated and shorn of half its usefulness. In this they went too far, and now that the State legislatures have got after them with all sorts of adverse legislation; now that their watered stocks have tumbled all over them; now that they want to borrow money and the public does not want to lend—they turn to the Federal Government for protection, and say: "Let us work together to operate the railroads for the good of all."



Cherry Ripe

EDEN PHILLPOTT



ILLUSTRATED BY
ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

THIS is an important story about the extraordinary cunning of a man generally known as "Cherry Ripe," from selling cherries; and, to tell it right, I must first explain about our football-field and a wood and a meadow. After the football-field comes a narrow wood, well known as the place for fights, and also wood-pigeons' nests, which breed there in great quantities. It is a long and narrow wood, and then comes a meadow, also long, but not so narrow. This meadow is a very up-and-down affair, with hollows in it; and at the bottom, in one corner, a drinking-place for cows has been arranged, where yellow irises grow in summer, and where most of our tame frogs come from. There is a clump of trees in this field, and a hawk once built in them; but "Freckles" found the nest and took the eggs, so the hawk did not build there again. After the up-and-down meadow, there comes an old, rather broken wall, and inside the wall is the orchard and nursery-garden of Cherry Ripe.

Needless to say his real name was not Cherry Ripe, but Jenkins—not any relation to the Jenkins at Merivale, though chaps who wanted to rile Jenkins always pretended that Cherry Ripe was his father; which much annoyed Jenkins. Because this Cherry Ripe was a fierce and a common man, and had been known to be dismissed with a caution for ill-treating a horse, and was no friend to us, either.

He made his living by fruit and vege-

tables; and at the right season of the year sold cherries, of which he had many fine trees in his nursery-garden. He also had apples and pears and gooseberries in great abundance. He also laid out large pieces of his nursery-garden in spring flowers for market, and he grew onions and turnips and rhubarb, and many other uninteresting things.

We naturally went there to see how it looked from time to time, and he chased us a good deal over the meadow; but, when we were once in the wood, he was, of course, powerless. In fact, he never caught anybody in fair hunting except Chilvers, who was once down by the pond collecting waterman beetles in his shoe, having nothing else to do it with. But Chilvers had never been in the nursery-garden in his life, and told Cherry Ripe so. Only he refused to believe Chilvers, and said that he was trespassing just as much in the meadow as he would have been in the orchard. Which, in its paltry way, was true. Chilvers then offered him a penny and an Indian coin for twelve waterman beetles; and all he did was to say, "No cheek!" and box Chilvers on the ear and tell him to be off. So he made a bitter enemy of Chilvers.

This Cherry Ripe was old and ugly. He never seemed to shave, and yet his beard never seemed to grow. What there was looked a mangy gray, streaked with brown. He wore an old hat that had once been black, but was

now rather inclined to turn green, and he had glittering eyes, one of which watered. He had also a curious way of lifting up and down his eyebrows; which Millray said showed a bad disposition, and was common to gorillas. He had been heard to laugh when picking apples with his daughters. But he never laughed at us, and, when we took to calling him Cherry Ripe, he hated us, and often shook his fist at us from a distance.

So we then felt something had to be done against him to score off him.

When this was decided upon, Stegges and Methuen and Pedlar and myself—me being Weston—and Chilvers, went into "committee," as it is called; and, in fact, we had a regular meeting. Many others wanted to join; but we felt five was enough, and we had a special cause for going into committee against Cherry Ripe for different good reasons.

Chilvers, of course, had been licked by Cherry Ripe, because to box one's ears is the same as licking one in a very insulting manner. Pedlar, also, had been insulted and a good deal hurried twice by Cherry Ripe, when he found him catapulting quite harmlessly in his orchard in December, when, of course, there was nothing to take but vegetables; and Methuen and Stegges, once meeting Cherry Ripe going the rounds, with his cart and fruit and scales for weighing things, had politely stopped him, and asked to buy a small quantity. And Cherry Ripe had the frightful impertinence to say that "no chap wearing them hats" should have so much as a spring onion of his growing—which was not only turning away business, but cheeking the school colors openly. So it seemed about time to do something, and we accordingly did. I may say that I had no particular grudge against Cherry Ripe, but I was well known at being better at wall-climbing than any chap who ever came to Merivale. Climbing had always been my strong point, and, as I was also going to be a missionary later in life, I kept it up; because you never know—not if you are a missionary.

The committee merely decided that,

as the cherry season was now near, we had better wait for it, and then, at the first opportunity, make a "Jameson Raid." This is a particular sort of raid invented by the great Doctor Jameson, of Africa, and it consists of doing something so suddenly that nobody is ready. A Jameson raid is useless if the other side is prepared; it is also useless if you are not prepared yourself. The great thing is to be first, and also an important part is to commit the raid where and when it will be least expected. Therefore we gave it out, hoping that it would somehow get to Cherry Ripe, that we meant to make a raid on his young apples on Wednesday, being a half-holiday; whereas the truth was we were going to have a dash at his cherries on the Saturday. Stegges arranged the details.

I won't say much about what happened, because the thing failed even more fearfully than Doctor Jameson's affair long ago. We were deceived in a most peculiar manner, owing to the deliberate cunning of Cherry Ripe; and afterward, talking it over while we wrote two thousand Latin lines each, we came to the conclusion that there was a traitor at work. Naturally we thought of Fowle, but Fowle knew nothing; besides, he was in the hospital at the time with something the matter with his knee.

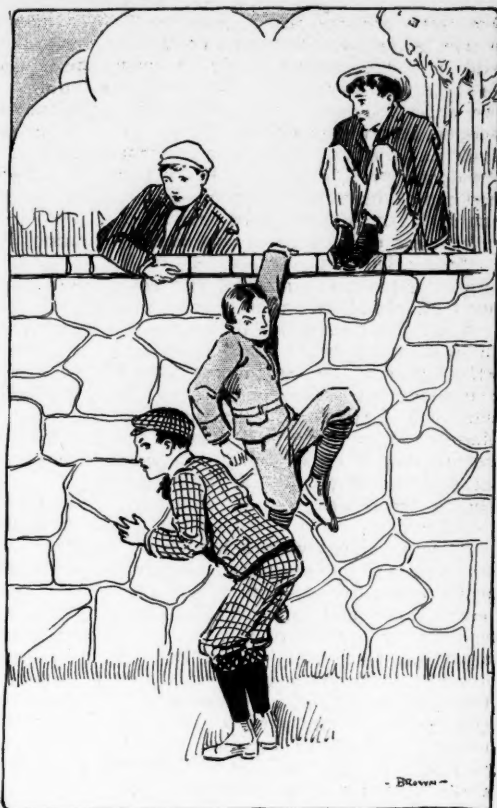
To go back, I must explain that all went well until we got on the top of Cherry Ripe's wall. Then what should we see but Cherry Ripe up a cherry-tree, and his daughters down below? They were a long way off, and we saw at a glance that it would take Cherry Ripe about a year to climb down from his tree, even if he saw us. As for his daughters, seeing our ages were fifteen and upward, except Chilvers, who was certainly only thirteen, but could run faster than his sister, who was seventeen, we did not fear them.

As Cherry Ripe was picking cherries, we went for the green gooseberries. I dropped down first—in a very stealthy manner, that Freckles had taught me before he left school; then Pedlar and Methuen dropped, and then

Chilvers. He fell rather awkwardly, and smashed off a large purple cabbage, and was glad of it.

But Steggles stopped on the wall, for some private reason. He said afterward, when taxed with treachery, that it wasn't so in the least; but that from the very beginning he had had a curious feeling when he woke up that day. It is the feeling you get when you wake up on a day that you are going to be flogged; and you have the same feeling, only far, far worse, on the day when you are going to be hung. All criminals know this. Steggles certainly shouted "Cave!" as soon as the horrible moment came; but when he did finally drop off the wall, it was on the other side. In fact, he escaped, and left us to our fate. Nothing could be done to Steggles, but we never felt the same to him again.

What happened was this. We were just eating a few gooseberries rather fast, before settling down steadily to fill our pockets, when Steggles gave the alarm. But it was too late. Suddenly there sprang up from their hiding-places no less than three men—the youngest not less than twenty years old; and the eldest was Cherry Ripe himself. This so much horrified us, as we had seen him at the top of a high cherry-tree two hundred yards away only a second before, that we lost our instinct of self-preservation, and fell a prey to the enemy. We were all caught, in fact, except Steggles, and we were then marched down to Cherry Ripe's house, and then along the road, and so back to Merivale. His hateful daughters stood and sniggered at us as we were taken past them; and then we saw that the whole thing was a mean plot, and, in fact, a swizz. A swizz is a chouse, and a chouse is the same as a



I dropped down first—in a very stealthy manner.

sell. It was a scarecrow in the tree, and not Cherry Ripe at all! The scarecrow wore his green hat, and his daughters pretended to be talking to him. As Chilvers said, the last of the Mohicans or Sherlock Holmes would have been deceived by such a subtle plot. Afterward we found, curiously enough, that we had collected exactly thirteen gooseberries before the crash came; which shows that thirteen is an unlucky number whatever scientific people may say against it.

Cherry Ripe brought us back to Merivale, and came to the front door and asked to see Doctor Dunstan. He

gave his name as "Mr. Jenkins, of the Merivale and District Fruit Farm," and said it in a very grand tone of voice, as if he was somebody. But the doctor, little knowing what was going to happen, sent out to tell Mr. Jenkins to walk in. Pedlar said he thought that the doctor probably hoped Cherry Ripe had come with an advantageous offer to supply Merivale with green stuff at low prices; but of course this was not so.

Doctor Dunstan received us in his study, and he was much surprised to see Chilvers appear after Cherry Ripe, and still more surprised to see the rest of us come behind.

"And what may be the meaning of this deputation?" said the doctor. "Perhaps you, Methuen, will explain."

But Cherry Ripe said that he had come to do the explaining. Certainly he told the truth, but he told it in a beastly mean way.

He said:

"There's times when a man has got to stand up for his rights, mister"—meaning the doctor—"and this is one of 'em. These here young rips be always driving my life out of me, and an example must be made. I was half in a mind to send for a policeman; but I thought as I'd give 'em one more chance for their parents' sakes, so brought 'em to you, because, no doubt, you be paid very well for l'arning 'em their lessons and keeping 'em out of mischief. I've two things against 'em, and one is that they bawl 'Cherry Ripe' after me morning, noon, and night, and bite their thumbs at me, and do many other rude things; and the other is that now, this minute, I've caught 'em red-handed in my gooseberry bed, tucking down my fruit for all they were worth. That's trespass, and it's also theft; and I don't want no more of it."

"Thank you," said the doctor. "You have stated your case with a lucidity and force that does you no little credit, Mr. Jenkins. Now the accused and the accuser may freely speak; while I, as arbiter between them, reserve the last word—and I fear the last action also!" His eye roamed over to where the canes were kept. Then he went on.

"Your indictment consists of two articles, and we will take them in your own order. You submit that these youths have insulted you, have trespassed on your private property, and have stolen your goods. Now, boy Pedlar, have you or have you not, at any time and in any public place, addressed Mr. Jenkins of the Merivale and District Fruit Farm as 'Cherry Ripe'?"

"Yes, sir," said Pedlar.

"Methuen?"

"Yes, sir."

"Weston?"

"Yes, sir."

"Chilvers?"

"Yes, sir."

The doctor seemed disappointed, and Cherry Ripe smiled with a grim and scornful smile.

"To accost an honest purveyor of the fruits of the earth with words which, in the nature of his calling, it is necessary that he should himself loudly repeat at intervals—to do this is a senseless and an offensive act," said the doctor. "Nothing can be said in favor of it. No earthly benefit—not even the meretricious semblance of benefit—can accrue to the boy who bawls 'Cherry Ripe' after somebody else. The operation shows a lack of mental balance that may make us fear for the sanity of the performer, and regard the probable course of his future with dismay and the liveliest forebodings. But now we are faced with accusations of a very different character. It is asserted that you four boys have gone out of bounds and thus disobeyed me; that you have trespassed on another's private property, and so made of no account the laws of man; and, lastly, that you have taken fruit that did not belong to you—that you have broken the Eighth Commandment, and thus shattered the sacred edict of your Maker!"

The doctor worked this up, as only he can, till we saw the immense number of laws we had broken all at once—like you do when you begin to play golf—and of course it was a very solemn moment for everybody. Even Cherry Ripe looked rather frightened.

The doctor rolled it out, and shook his finger at Cherry Ripe as much as at us. Then came the questions.

"Is this infamous imputation true, Edgar Methuen?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you, Harold Pedlar?"

"Yes, sir."

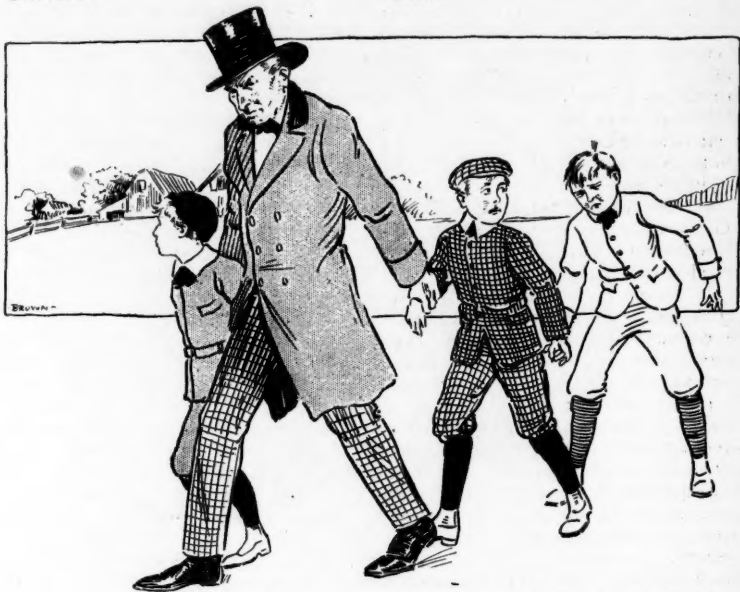
"Weston?"

"Yes, sir."

"Chilvers?"

tice cries with trumpet tongue. And be under no apprehension, Jenkins, that justice will miscarry on this occasion. As an agriculturist——"

Here the doctor forgot us, and talked like anything to Cherry Ripe about growing vegetables and Horace and Virgil, and many other matters. Cherry Ripe kept creeping nearer and nearer to the door. Then, at last, he got in a word.



Cherry Ripe brought us back to Merivale.

Chilvers, like a little fool, tried to hedge against the future.

"Yes, and I'm very sorry, sir," he said.

The doctor looked at us as if we were some new sort of animal, and he didn't know how we had got in. He gave a tremendous snort, and took off his glasses. Then he turned to Cherry Ripe.

"To attempt any analysis of my personal emotions at this juncture would be vain," he said. "In these cases introspection may well be left for a subsequent occasion. For the moment jus-

"Don't be too hard on 'em this time, your honor. Just one, two, and another on the place that's made for it."

"Pardon me," answered the doctor, raising his hand. "You now trench on my prerogative, Jenkins. The question of what is to follow may very well be left with the preceptor of these fallen boys. Have no fear for that. And to plead for leniency before the breaking of a Commandment is to admit a personal laxity of view that I, for one, am bound to deplore."

Cherry Ripe had now reached the door, and I believe he thought that if

he stopped another moment the doctor would cane him, too. So he began to clear out. But first he said:

"Well, good night, all!" Then he hooked it—rather thankfully. And we wished *we* could.

We got four on each hand, and two thousand lines each, and to stop in for two half-holidays. So that, as Methuen very truly remarked, was first blood for Cherry Ripe.

II.

Of course this was merely the beginning of the great anti-Cherry Ripe feeling, and next term we were planning a deadly revenge with regard to a certain variety of apples in Cherry Ripe's orchard which were remarkably fine, when a great assistant came to our aid in the shape of Trelawny. This was that Trelawny who had such a terrible end in the matter of the protest of the wing dormitory. But many things happened first. He was fourteen and a fighter from the beginning. All his relations were also fighters, and poetry had been made about one who was condemned to death for magnificent fighting in historic times. This Trelawny, by the most curious accident, proved to know an immense deal about Cherry Ripe. And it came out that Trelawny's father, who was a retired soldier and only a colonel, though Trelawny said that if justice had been done he would be a general, at least, actually owned miles of land about Merivale, including Cherry Ripe's nursery-garden and the field.



"Perhaps you don't know who you're talking to, Mr. Jenkins," said Trelawny, in a very grand sort of voice.

"The beggar merely rents it from my father for so much per year," said Trelawny. "Why, if I said a word to my father, I could have the man turned out altogether, and his daughters and everybody. I'll soon teach him!"

This was a pretty good score for us, and we soon arranged to show Cherry Ripe that things were changed. Trelawny took to strolling about in Cherry Ripe's meadow as if it belonged to him; and of course, as I pointed out to Trelawny, when his father died, though I hoped it would not be for twenty years, at least—still he had to—and

when he did, the meadow and the orchard and everything would actually be Trelawny's own, to do what he liked with. He said it was so; and he said that he should pretty soon clear Cherry Ripe out and build almshouses for old soldiers broken in the wars, when he came to have the ground. He wouldn't take apples or anything. He said that was paltry; but he had a fixed idea that he ought to be perfectly free of the place, and he went on

strolling about in it till at last Cherry Ripe surprised him down at the pond. I was there, too, but Cherry Ripe didn't recognize me, which, no doubt, was lucky.

He seemed to have something on his mind, for he didn't get into a sweat, but merely said:

"Now, you boys, you slope off to your playground—can't have you messing about here."

"Perhaps you don't know who you're talking to, Mr. Jenkins," said Trelawny, in a very grand sort of voice.

CHERRY RIPE

Then Cherry Ripe jumped. "Lord! the sauce of you kids nowadays!" he said. "Why can't your old gentleman over there teach you manners as well as figures and foreign languages?"

Clearly he meant no less a person than Doctor Dunstan. "My name is Trelawny," began Trelawny.

"A very good name, too," said Cherry Ripe. "Take care you never bring no discredit on it, there's a good 'boy'!"

"My father is your landlord," said Trelawny. "And I'll thank you not to call me 'bov'!"

Cherry Ripe was by no means as much struck by this as you might have expected.

"You're the colonel's young shaver—eh? Well, I hope you'll turn out as sensible a man; though I do wish me and him saw alike on the subject of a new tomato house. However, everybody's a right to his own opinion."

Trelawny was fuming, like a train wanting to start.

"You don't seem to understand," he said, "that this very field we're in at this moment will be mine before long!"

"The colonel's not ailing, I hope?" said Cherry Ripe, very civilly. I could now see that Mr. Jenkins was laughing at Trelawny, but, luckily, Trelawny did not see this, or he might have taken some very desperate step.

"And I want to say further," went on Trelawny, not answering about his father, "that as this land will be mine sooner or later, I have a perfect right to walk on it when and where I choose."

"Agreed," said Cherry Ripe; "and, as I'm renting the land, and don't like rude little boys poking about where they've no business, I've got a perfect right to pull their ears for 'em when I catches 'em. So that's settled. Now we know where we are. Be off with you both, or I'll begin this minute!"



Peters, who hoped to be a detective of crime when he grew up.

Trelawny was as furious as a grown man. He turned a sort of color like stewed fruit; but of course we had to go. There was nothing else we could do.

"I shall write to my father about this, and you'll soon find out you can't insult your own landlord's son with impunity," Trelawny shouted, as we got through the hedge back into our wood.

"Can't do better. And tell him what I said," answered Cherry Ripe. Then he seemed to forget us, and stood quite still, looking into the pond. Evidently he had other things on his mind beside Trelawny; but Trelawny didn't think so, and believed that Jenkins was standing like that in a frightful funk to think of the dangerous thing he'd done.

"However, it's too late now; I shall write to my father next Sunday," said Trelawny; and he did.

He got a letter back, and we were rather keen to hear what his father was going to do about it, and expected that he would read it out to us. But he tore the letter up small, and threw it away, and merely said he was surprised to find his father didn't agree with him.

"But I'll make it clear that the man ought to be sacked when I go home," said Trelawny.

Funnily enough, though he'd torn this letter up so small and flung it scornfully away, we found out afterward what was in it; because Peters, who hoped to be a detective of crime when he grew up, always collected anything with writing on it to decipher mysteries; and it was him who found out what Johnson's pet name at home was, and how many sisters West had, and other things not generally known. He said if a letter was once torn up and flung away, that it was public property for a detective; and so when Trelawny had gone, Peters collected the bits of his letter and pieced it together after taking frightful trouble. It was a detective-like but not a sportsmanlike thing to do, and Trelawny, when he came to hear of it, challenged Peters. In fact, they fought, and Peters just won, being a year and a half older. Still, the letter certainly was rather curious, considering it came from Trelawny's own father. It read like this:

DEAR TEDDY: I've got your letter, and I've dropped a line to Jenkins directing him to give you and any of your friends a real good licking every time he catches you on his ground. Your affectionate father,

TRELOAR TRELAWNY.

Of course the thing couldn't be allowed to stop there. We were all on Trelawny's side, though his father wasn't. In fact, Pedlar and Methuen and me were rather vexed with Trelawny's father; and we told Trelawny so; and he said he was, too. He said:

"We'll be revenged next term, as it is too late this. We must 'all think of a heavy score against Jenkins"—he never called Cherry Ripe anything but Jenkins for some reason—"and the best idea is the one we'll carry out."

And everybody interested in the matter quite agreed; but Steggles did not come into it, because Trelawny utterly barred Steggles from the first.

III.

Next term the great idea of how to crush Cherry Ripe came to me out of

the Bible. I let everybody speak first, and then, as nobody had said anything like as good, I said:

"We will do what the enemy did in the New Testament, and sow tares in his ground."

Everybody thought the idea fine, but difficult, and Chilvers asked:

"What are tares?"

I said I wasn't exactly sure, and Methuen said it was a sort of grass, and Trelawny said it was a parable. Anyhow, we didn't know where to buy them. Finally we decided not to ask for tares, but some sort of seed that would grow quickly and get a deep hold of the ground, and ruin anything else for yards round. Unfortunately we didn't know much about wild things in general, and we asked Tomkins, who is our champion botanist, and he said "willow-herb." But there were no seeds about at that time of the year, it being February, and so Trelawny said:

"We will confide in Batson, who is well known to be the son of a green-grocer and seedsman."

But it happened that Batson, who was the gardener's boy at Dunstan's, was leaving to better himself. However, there was just time before he went, and we let him into our secret score against Cherry Ripe, and gave him the money with which to buy some seed of some vigorous growing thing, to sow in Cherry Ripe's nursery-garden and choke his vegetables when they came up. Batson said that he would do his best. He said it might have to be grass-seed or clover; but he promised it should be a good choking thing.

Certainly it looked hopeful, because he soon brought a bag of seeds, and said they were a kind of clover that, if once sown, could not be got out of the ground again without plowing. Then came the question of the time, and we decided that next Saturday was the day. There happened to be a big game of football, so we were all free, excepting Methuen, who had to play.

All went well, and when the game began to get exciting, Trelawny and Pedlar and Chilvers and I went into

the wood unseen, and got to the Cherry Ripe side of it. Certain chaps had been in his field a good deal lately, hunting for a very beautiful red fungus that was to be found in the hedges on dead sticks, and Cherry Ripe had been a good deal worried by them.

Then came the first surprise of that day. There was a huge board stuck up in the field facing our wood, with these remarkable words on it: "Danger! Beware of the Bull!"

Our first step was to get back into the hedge. The field seemed to be quite empty, but there are many hollows in it, and a bull might easily have been sitting down quite near us. Or it might have been hidden in the cluster of trees in the middle. One thing was clear. It was not at the pond.

Trelawny said:

"This man is worth fighting. I'm glad he's got a bull, because it makes more strategy necessary for us."

And Pedlar said:

"And I'm glad, too."

But I was not glad, and so I didn't say so; and as for Chilvers, he went further, and openly said that he thought a bull altered everything.

It was about a hundred and fifty yards across the field from the wood to Cherry Ripe's wall; and it is well known that a bull can run three times as fast as a man, and five times as fast as a boy.

I reminded Trelawny of this, and he said:

"I know all that; it's a question of strategy."

And I said:

"Yes, but strategy won't alter facts."

He thought a bit, and said:

"You chaps stop here, and I'll reconnoiter."

But Pedlar, who was nearly six months older than Trelawny, said he ought to reconnoiter, too. Finally, they both went to reconnoiter in different directions, and came back in five minutes. Neither had seen the bull.

"There's no bull!" said Trelawny.

"It's a subterfuge. Come on."

"Wait," said Chilvers. "I have a feeling it's not a subterfuge. Something tells me there is a bull."



There was a huge board stuck up in the field, with these remarkable words on it.

Trelawny said it was cowardice, and Chilvers said it was a presentiment. Anyway, no time could be lost, and Chilvers was firm, so we left him. He was half-inclined to come, but said that an uncle of his had once been gored by a buffalo, or some such thing, in the far West; and somehow he felt that this particular adventure would not suit him, though he would have feared nothing else. Of course Trelawny explained that this was no excuse, even if true. But, though white and very worried, Chilvers was firm. He refused to follow, so we went alone.

We made a *détour* of the trees in the middle of the field, and crept forward in Indian file. Fifty yards from the wall Pedlar whispered that he saw something red in a hollow, which might easily be a bull's back; so Trelawny said "Sprint!" and we threw off caution to the winds and sprinted. So we got to the wall in safety, and, as if to reward us for the effort, what should we see on the other side but a beautiful bit of ground all prepared for seeds? It was smoothed and arranged, and little narrow trenches had been drawn in it, about two inches deep—evidently for seeds. It was frightful luck and playing into the hands of the enemy, as Trelawny said. He instantly gave the word, and we dropped. There was not a soul in sight—only a spade and two rakes, where the man who had been working had left them.

"A commander always seizes any chance the enemy offer," said Trelawny. "Pour the seed pretty thick along the drills, and everywhere else, then take the rakes, and rake it all over until everything is quite smooth!"

So all Cherry Ripe's arrangements for planting seed were used by us to sow a particularly deadly sort of clover. We worked hard, and in about five minutes the thing was done by me and Pedlar, while Trelawny mounted guard.

Then the exciting work began, and Trelawny shouted:

"Take cover! They're coming!"

But there was no cover, and so we

all got back the way we had come, and just as Cherry Ripe and a man ran up from another part of the garden we reached the top of the wall, and prepared to leap down. But, luckily, we didn't. In fact, even as it was we only just saved Pedlar, and lugged him back in time.

The bull had arrived!

He was there, not more than twenty yards from the wall; and he was a whacker. He had an enormous body and head, and his forehead was curly, and his eyes fierce, and his horns rather short, but very thick. A copper ring was in his nose, and his hoofs turned up rather curiously, like Turkish slippers. There was some hay flung down in front of him, and he was smelling it. He was evidently a large and fierce bull; and him being on one side of the wall, and Cherry Ripe on the other, made it a very trying position for us on the top.

Trelawny said:

"This is critical!"

And Cherry Ripe said:

"Hello, my brave chap, how d'you find your future property is looking? I hope you're pretty well satisfied?"

Trelawny said:

"This is a case for a parley."

But Cherry Ripe did all the parleying. We sat down on the wall, which was easier and safer than standing on it. We sat with our faces to Cherry Ripe and our backs to the bull.

"This is an ambuscade in a way," said Trelawny. "In fact, we are rather scored off. In war we should be shot. Not that it would matter, as we have done our work."

"Now, my young shavers," began Cherry Ripe, "I see you've been very busy down here on your own account, so perhaps you'll just step off that wall and do a bit of work for me. You can take your choice. Either we'll all go straight along to your old gentleman, and see what he'll say and do about it, or you can step down here—all three of you—and set to work over a bit of weeding. Take your choice, and be quick."

"We'll confer," said Trelawny.

Which we did do; and Pedlar and I thought one thing, and Trelawny thought another. He said that it would be far more dignified to go back and suffer from Doctor Dunstan, as an equal; but Pedlar and I had done that before, and we didn't care in the least about the dignity. We said that to do a bit of weeding for Cherry Ripe would be mere child's play to four on each hand, and perhaps more, not to mention a few thousand lines chucked in, and a couple of half-holidays gone.

So Trelawny said:

"I'm outvoted in the conference."

Then he got down, and we got down, also.

Cherry Ripe seemed rather pleased at what we had decided to do, because I don't think he wanted to have another talk with the doctor any more than we did. But he certainly had arranged rather a big job for us.

"You've got to pick it clean, mind you—roots and all," he said. Then he divided the bit of land into three with sticks, and it seemed to us that we had to weed about as much as a square mile each.

"You've got the biggest job, young master," he said to Trelawny. "And that's only right and fair, because you're such a big man and take such big views."

Trelawny did not answer, but he was evidently in a very proud frame of mind. He seemed determined to show Cherry Ripe something, if it was only how to weed.

We worked jolly hard, and Cherry Ripe kept us at it. Then, in the distance, went up three cheers; and we knew the game was over; and, from the sound of the cheers, it looked as if we'd won; because after a game we always cheer the enemy, and we always cheer him heartier if we've beat him—not intentionally, but still the sound is different.

"Now you can all nip back," said Cherry Ripe. "Better go the way you came—through the wood."

"And be killed by your bull, I suppose?" said Pedlar. "Not likely!"

"We have accepted your terms," said

Trelawny, "and if you are an honorable foe, you'll let us out by the gate."

"Better go through the wood," answered Cherry Ripe. "It's a lot shorter, and as to the old bull, you needn't mind him. He's my daughter's pet. He wouldn't hurt a daddy-long-legs, much less a nice young chap like you. Tame isn't the word for him. A pet lamb's fierce to him. Come on. I'll go as far as the wood with you, if you're frightened."

All this was true. And when we got back into the field Cherry Ripe scratched the bull's curly head, and the bull almost purred. It was the mildest and humblest sort of bull you ever saw, though so huge; and to see an enormous bull so close was rather interesting in its way.

"My youngest daughter often sits on his back," said Cherry Ripe. "This here bull has got a heart of gold, I assure you."

"Another strategy," said Trelawny to me. "Certainly, the man's cunning is frightful. I think I shall tell him about the seed—just to show him we've scored a bit, too."

I advised not, but Trelawny was so stung by the way we'd been defeated all round by the wretched Cherry Ripe, that, just as we were leaving him, he said:

"It may interest you to know that we've sowed that patch of your beastly ground under the wall with weeds of the deadliest sort. In fact, you'll never get them out again. So that's one for us, anyway."

"Well done!" said Cherry Ripe. "Where did you get the seed from?"

"That's our business," answered Trelawny. "Anyway, you'll find it out presently."

"Well," answered Cherry Ripe, "I know where you got the seed. It was from my good friend Batson. And his boy be coming here to work next week. He's learned all your gardener at the school can teach him. He brought the tale to his father; and his father brought it to me; and so I got the ground ready for you, knowing what a

dashing fellow you are, and what a hurry you'd be in."

"More fool you," said Trelawny.

"Not so fast. The seed you sowed was lettuce-seed! Good night, my dears; and when you say your prayers afore you go to sleep to-night, you can all thank the Lord that you've done a bit of honest, useful work for once in your lives!"

We talked it over during prep, and Pedlar said:

"On the whole, we'd better keep this afternoon's work to ourselves."

And I said:

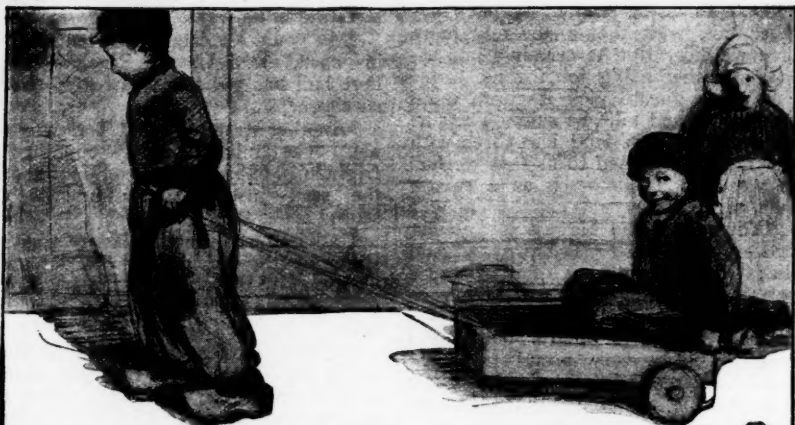
"We were overreached by superior cunning, and we'd better give Cherry Ripe best in future."

And Trelawny said:

"Wait! This, in a way, is a defeat. But I'll arrange a Waterloo for Cherry Ripe yet."

Meaning, of course, that he would be Wellington, and that Cherry Ripe would be merely Napoleon.

However, though I didn't say it to Trelawny, I doubt very much if he can ever score off Cherry Ripe till he grows up. Then, of course, Cherry Ripe will find him a bitter and relentless foe.



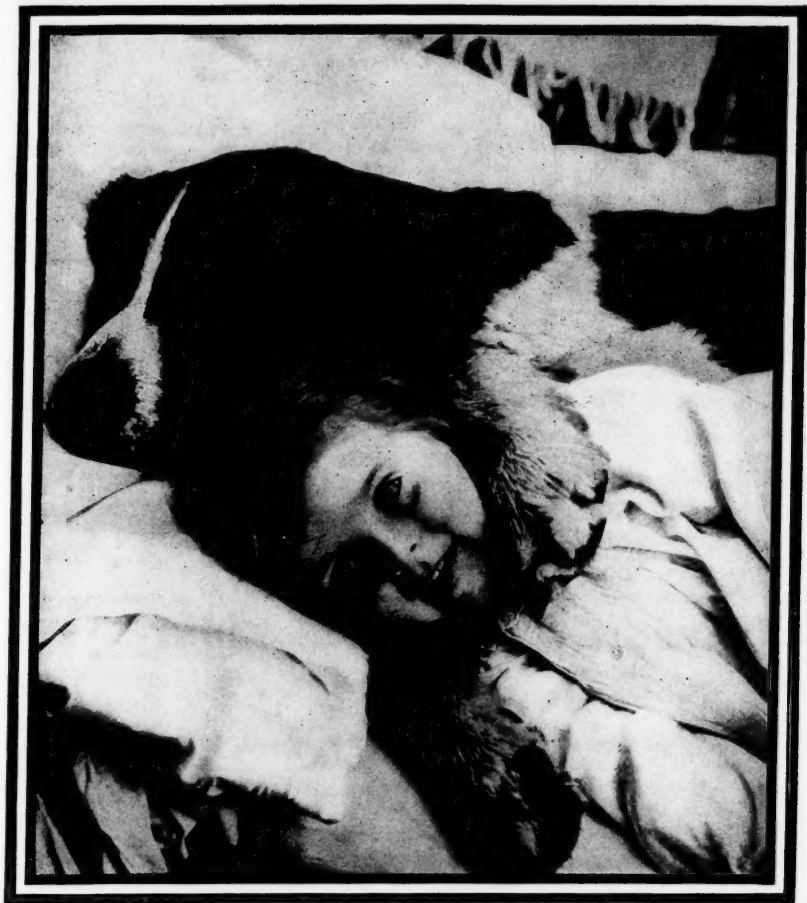
You may talk about your broughams
And your stylish coach and pair,
You may watch the others walking
As they enviously stare,
But however fine you think it
Heinji never will agree
That you have a carriage finer
Or a better horse than he.

Estelle M. Kerr.

Our Pets and Their Pets

SMITH'S MAGAZINE ART SECTION

TWELFTH SERIES



"NO, I'M NOT AFRAID OF HIM"

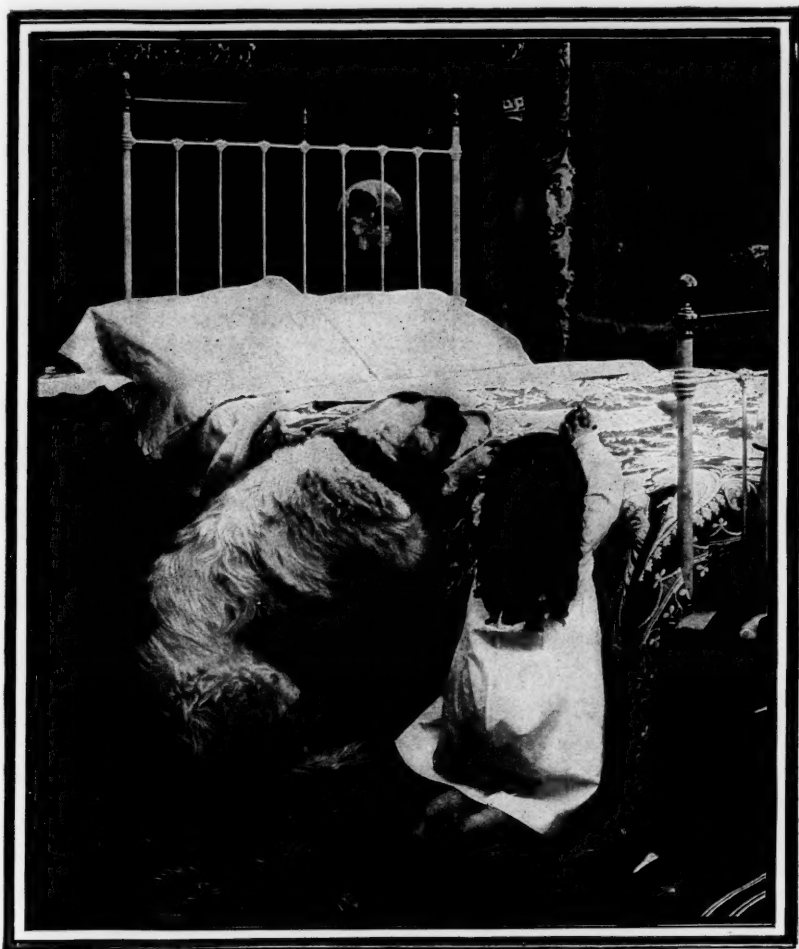
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"PAPA IS COMING"

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GIVING HER FOREIGN PET AN OUTING
IN THE PARK

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE ART SECTION,
Twelfth Series

"TAKE A SPOON, PIGGIE"

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THE TERROR THAT TRAVELED BY NIGHT

BY
HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

PROBABLY Constable Zeburee Nute couldn't have picked out a moment more inauspicious for tackling First Selectman Aaron Sproul on business not immediately connected with the matter then in hand.

First Selectman Sproul was standing beside a granite post, pounding his fist on it with little regard to barked knuckles, and uttering some perfectly awful profanity.

A man stood on the other side of the post, swearing with just as much gusto; the burden of his remarks being that he wasn't afraid of any by-josoly old split codfish that ever came ashore—insulting reference to Cap'n Sproul's seafaring life.

Behind Cap'n Sproul were men with pickaxes, shovels, and hoes—listening.

Behind the decrier of mariners were men with shovels, hoes, and pickaxes—listening.

The granite post marked the town line between Scotaze and Vienna.

This post was four miles or so from Scotaze village, and Constable Nute had driven out to interview the first selectman, bringing as a passenger a slim, pale young man, who was smoking cigarettes, one after the other.

They arrived right at the climax of trouble that had been brooding sullenly for a week. In annual town-meeting Scotaze and Vienna had voted to change over the interurban highway so that it would skirt Rattledown Hill in-

stead of climbing straight over it, as the fathers had laid it out in the old days for the sake of directness; forgetting that a pail bail upright is just as long as a pail bail lying horizontal.

First Selectman Sproul had ordered his men to take a certain direction with the new road in order to avoid some obstructions that would entail extra expense on the town of Scotaze.

Selectman Trufant, of Vienna, was equally as solicitous to save expense on behalf of his own town, and refused to swing his road to meet Scotaze's highway. Result: the two pieces of highway came to the town line separated by at least a dozen rods, and there stopped doggedly. To judge from the language that the two town-officers were now exchanging across the granite post, it seemed likely that the roads would stay separated.

"Our s'leckman can out-talk him three to one," confided one of the Scotaze supporters to Constable Nute. "I never heard deep-water cussin' before, with all the trimmin's. Old Trufant ain't got northin' but side-hill conversation, and I reckon he's about run down."

Constable Nute should have awaited more fitting opportunity, but Constable Nute was a rather direct and one-ideaed person. As manager of the town hall he had business to transact with the first selectman, and he proceeded to transact it.

"Mister S'leckman," he shouted, "I want to introduce you to Perfessor—Perfessor—I ain't got your name yit so I can speak it," he said, turning to his passenger.

"Professor Derolli," prompted the passenger, flicking his cigarette ash.

Cap'n Sproul merely shot one red glance over his shoulder, and then proceeded with his arraignment of Vienna in general—mentally, morally, socially, politically, and commercially.

"The perfessor," bawled Constable Nute, unable to get his team very near the selectman, on account of the upheaved condition of the road, "has jest arranged with me to hire the town hall for a week, and he wants to arrange with the selectmen to borrow the use of the graveyard for a day or so."

The constable's vociferousness put the cap'n out of voice, and he whirled to find that his auditors had lost all interest in the road dispute, and naturally, too.

"To borrow the use of the graveyard, privilege bein' throwed in, considerin' that he hires the town hall for a week," repeated the constable.

Cap'n Sproul hated cigarettes; and he hated slim, pale young men who dressed foppishly, classing all such under the general term "dude." The combination of the two, attending the interruption of his absorbing business of the moment, put a wire edge on his temper.

"Graveyard! Yas!" he roared. "I'll appoint his funeral for two o'clock this afternoon, and I'll guarantee to have the corpse ready."

"In transactin' business it ain't no time for jokin'," protested the direct Mr. Nute.

"There ain't no joke to it," returned the cap'n viciously, seizing a pickax.

"It ain't much of a way for a first selectman of a town to act in public," persisted Constable Nute, "when town business is put before him."

That remark and a supercilious glance from the professor through his cigarette smoke brought the cap'n on the trot to the side of the wagon.

"I'm 'tendin' to town business—don't

you forget that! And I'm 'tendin' to it so close that I ain't got time to waste on any cheap peep-show critters. Don't want 'em in town. Clear out!"

"I'll make you sorry for insulting a gentleman," choked the professor.

"Clear out!" insisted the cap'n. "You ain't got any right drivin' onto this road. It ain't been opened to travel——"

"And it looks as though it never would be," remarked Constable Nute sarcastically; but daunted by the glare in the cap'n's eyes he began to turn his horse. "I want you to understand, S'leckman Sproul, that there are two other s'leckmen in this town, and you can't run everything, even if you're started in to do it."

It was pointed reference to the differences that existed in the board of selectmen, on account of Cap'n Sproul's determination to command. It left no chance for an adjustment of the matter, such as might have been effected after the first outburst of the cap'n's pettish rage.

Two very indignant men rode away, leaving a perfectly furious one standing in the road shaking his fists after them. And he was the more angry because he felt that he had been hastier with the constable than even his overwrought state of mind warranted. Then, as he reflected on the graveyard matter, his curiosity began to get the better of his wrath, and to the surprise of his Vienna antagonist he abandoned the field without another word, and started for Scotaze village with his men and dump-carts.

But dump-carts move slowly, and when the cap'n arrived at the town house Constable Zeburee Nute was nailing up a hand-bill that announced that Professor Derolli, the celebrated hypnotist, would occupy the town hall for a week, and that during his stay he would perform the remarkable feat of burying a subject in the local graveyard for forty-eight hours, and that he would "raise this subject from the dead," alive and well. The ink was just dry on a permit to use the graveyard, signed by Selectmen Batson Reeves and Philias

Blodgett. This grim experiment was to wind up the professor's engagement. In the meantime he was to give a nightly entertainment at the hall, consisting of hypnotism and psychic readings, the latter by "that astounding occult seer and prophetess, Madame Dawn."

Cap'n Sproul went home growling strong language, but confessing to himself that he was a little ashamed to enter into any further contest with the cigarette-smoking showman and the two men who were the cap'n's hated associates on the board of selectmen.

That evening neighbor Hiram Look called with Mrs. Look on their way to the village to attend the show, but Cap'n Sproul doggedly resisted their appeals that he take his wife and go along, too. He opposed no objection, however, when Louada Murilla decided that she would accept neighbor Look's offer of escort.

But when she came back and looked at him and sighed, and sighed and looked at him till bedtime, shaking her head sadly when he demanded the reason for her pensiveness, he wished he had made her stay at home. He decided that Zeburee Nute had probably been busy with his tongue as to that boyish display of temper on the Rattle-down Hill Road.

Hiram Look came over early the next morning and found the cap'n thinning beets in his garden. The expression on the visitor's face did not harmonize with the brightness of the sunshine.

"I don't blame you for not goin'," he growled. "But if you had an idee of what they was goin' to do to get even, I should 'a' most thought you'd 'a' tipped me off. It would have been the part of a friend, anyway."

The cap'n blinked up at him in mute query.

"It ain't ever safe to sass people that's got the ear of the public, like reporters and show people," proceeded Hiram rebukingly. "I've been in the show business, and I know. They can do you, and do you plenty, and you don't stand the show of an isuckle in a hot spider, 'side of 'em."

"What are ye tryin' to get through you, anyway?" demanded the first selectman.

"Hain't your wife said northin' about it?"

"She's set and looked at me like I was a cake that she'd forgot in the oven," confided the cap'n sullenly; "but that's all I know about it."

"Well, that's about what I've had to stand in my fam'ly, too. I tell ye, ye hadn't ought to have sassed that mesmerist feller. Oh, I heard all about it," he cried, flapping hand of protest as the cap'n tried to speak. "I don't know why you done it. What I say is, you ought to have consulted me, who know show people better'n you do. Then you ain't heard northin' of what she said?"

"If you've got anything to tell me, why in the name of the three-toed Cicero don't you tell it?" blurted the cap'n indignantly.

He got up and brushed the dirt off his knees. "If there's anything that stirs my temper, it's this mumble-grumble, whiffle-and-hint business. Out and open, that's my style." He was reflecting testily on the peculiar reticence of his wife.

"I agree with you," replied Hiram calmly. But his mind was on another phase of the question. "If she had been out and open it wouldn't have been so bad. It's this hintin' that does the most mischief. Give folks a hint, and a nasty imagination will do the rest. That's the way she's workin' it."

"She? Who?"

"Your mesmerist fellow's runnin' mate—that woman that calls herself Madame Dawn, and reads the past and tells the future."

"There ain't nobody can do no such thing," snapped Cap'n Sproul. "They're both frauds, and I didn't want 'em in town, and I was right about it."

"Bein' as how I was in the show business thirty years, you needn't feel called on to post me on fakes," said Hiram tartly. "But the bigger the fake is the better it catches the crowd. If she'd simply been an old scandal-monger at a quiltin'-bee and started a

story about us, we could run down the story, and run old scandal-grabber up a tree. But when a woman goes into a trance and a sperit comes teeterin' out from the dark behind the stage, and drops a white robe over her, and she begins to occult, or whatever they call it, and speaks of them in high places, and them with fat money-bags, and that ain't been long in our midst, and has come from no one jest knows where, and that she sees black shadders followin' 'em, along with wimmen weepin' and wringin' of their hands—well, when a woman sets on the town-hall stage and goes on in that strain for a half-hour, it ain't the kind of a show that I want to be at—not with my wife and yourn on the same settee with me."

He scowled on the cap'n's increasing perturbation.

"A man is a darned fool to fight a polecat, Cap'n Sproul, and you ought to have known better than to let drive at him as you did."

"She didn't call names, did she?" asked the cap'n.

"Call names! Of course she didn't call names. Didn't have to. There's the difference between scandal and occultin'. We can't get no bind on her for what she said. Now here are you and me, back here to settle down after roamin' the wide world over; jest got our feet placed, as you might say, and new married to good wimmen—and because we're a little fore-handed and independent, and seem to be enjoyin' life, every one is all ready to believe the worst about us on general principles. Mossbacks are always ready to believe that a man that's traveled any has been raising seventeen kinds of tophet all his life. All she had to do was to go into a trance, talk a little Injun, and then hint enough to set their imaginations to workin' about us. Up to now, judgin' by the way she's been lookin' at me, my wife believes I've got seven wives strewed around the country somewhere, either alive or buried in cellars. As to your wife, she's prob'ly got it figgered that a round-up of your fam'ly circle, admittin' all that's got a claim on you, would range all the way from a Hindu

to a Hottentot, and would look like a congress of nations. In about two days more—imagination still workin', and a few old she-devils in this place startin' stories to help it along—our wives will be hoppin' up every ten minutes to look down the road and see if any of the victims have hove in sight. And what can we do?"

Hiram lunged a vigorous kick straight before him.

"Find me that hole I just made in the air and I'll tell you, cap'n," he added, with bitter irony.

"It's—it's worse than what I figgered on," remarked the cap'n despondently, after a thoughtful pause. "If a woman like Louada Murilla will let herself get fooled and stirred up in that kind of a way by a fly-by-night critter, there ain't much hope of the rest of the neighborhood."

"It's a kind of lyin' that there ain't no fightin'," Hiram asserted. "And there are certain ones in this place that will keep it in the air. Now I didn't sass that mesmerist. But I got it about as tough as you did. I'll bet a thousand to one that Bat Reeves is gettin' back at me for cuttin' him out with the wider. It's reasonable," he declared, warming to the topic and checking items off on his stubby fingers. "Here's your mesmerist rushin' hot to Reeves complainin' about you and gettin' a permit from Reeves, along with a few pointers about you for occult use. Reeves hates you bad enough, but he hates me worse. And he sees to it that I get occulted, too. He ain't lettin' a chance like that slip past as soon as that perfessor lets him see what occultin' will do to a man. Why, condemn him hide and haslet, I believe he swapped that permit for a dose of so much occultin'—and I've got the dose."

"I should hate at my age to have to start in and go to sea again," mourned the cap'n, after long meditation; "but I reckon I'll either have to do that or go up in a balloon and stay there. There's too many tricks for me on land. They ring in all they can think of themselves, and then they go to work and get a ghost to help. I can't whale the

THE TERROR THAT TRAVELED BY NIGHT

daylights out of the ghost, and I don't suppose it would be proper for a first selectman to cuff the ears of the woman that said females was followin' me, wailin' and gnashin' their teeth, but I can lick that yaller-fingered, cigarette-suckin' dude, and pay the fine for so doin'—and reckon I've got my money's worth."

"You need a guarddeen," snorted Hiram. "She will put on her robe and accuse you of havin' the ghost of a murdered man a-chasin' you."

The cap'n grew white under his tan at this remark made by Hiram in all guilelessness, and the memory of a certain Portuguese sailor, slipped overboard after a brief but busy mutiny, went shuddering through his thoughts.

"Ain't got anything like that on your conscience, have you?" demanded the old showman bluntly.

"She didn't say nothin' only about women, did she?" evaded the cap'n.

"Didn't notice anything last night. She may be savin' something else for this evenin'," was Hiram's consoling answer. His air and the baleful glance he bent on his neighbor indicated that he still held that irascible gentleman responsible for their joint misfortune. And to show further displeasure, he whirled and stumped away across the fields toward his home.

Cap'n Aaron Sproul attended the show at the town hall that evening. He went alone, after his wife had plaintively sighed her negative. He hadn't in-



"The handwritin' ain't much different."

tended to go. But he was drawn by a certain fatal fascination. He had a sailor's superstitious half-belief in the supernatural. He had caught word during the day of some astonishing revelations made by the seeress to other persons in town, either by lucky guess or through secret pre-information, as his common sense told him. And yet his sneaking superstition whispered that there was "something in it, after all." If that mesmerist's spirit of retaliation should carry him to the extent of hinting about that Portuguese sailor, Cap'n Sproul resolved to be in that hall, ready to stand up and beard his defamers.

Evidently Professor Derolli spotted his enemy. For Madame Dawn, in order that vengeance should be certain of

its mark, repeated the vague yet perfectly obvious hints of the preceding evening, and Cap'n Sproul was thankful for the mystic gloom of the hall that hid his fury and his shame. He stole out of the place while the lights were still low. He feared for his self-restraint if he were to remain, and he realized what a poor figure he would make standing up there and replying to the malicious *farrago* of the woman under the veil.

For the rest of the professor's engagement Cap'n Aaron Sproul and Hiram Look kept sullenly to their castles, nursing indignant sense of their wrongs, and getting an occasional whiff of the scandal that was pursuing their names. Though their respective wives strove with pathetic loyalty to disbelieve all that the seeress had hinted at, and moved in sad silence about their duties, it was plain that the seed of evil had been planted deep in their imaginations. Poor human nature is only what it is, after all!

"Two better women never lived than them of ourn, and two that would be harder to turn," said Hiram to the cap'n, "but it wouldn't be human nature if they didn't wonder sometimes what we'd been up to all them years before we showed up here, and what that cussed occulter said has torched 'em on to thinkin' mighty hard. The only thing to do is to keep a stiff upper lip and wait till the clouds roll by. They'll come to their senses and be ashamed of themselves, give 'em time and rope enough."

Second Selectman Batson Reeves busied himself as a sort of master of ceremonies for Professor Derolli, acted as committee of investigation when the professor's "stock subject" remained for a day and night in a shallow trench in the village cemetery, and even gave them the best that his widower's house could afford at a Sunday dinner.

In the early flush of an August morning about a week after the departure of the hypnotic marvel and his companions, a mutual impulse seemed to actuate Selectman Sproul and Hiram Look at a moment surprisingly simultaneous.

They started out of their back doors, took the path leading over the hill between their farms, and met under the poplars at a point almost exactly halfway. It would be difficult to state which face expressed the most of embarrassed concern as they stood silently gazing at each other.

"I was comin' over to your house," said Hiram.

"I was startin' for yourn," said the cap'n.

Then both, like automatons pulled by the same string, dove hand into breast pocket, and pulled out a crumpled letter.

"Well, I'll be dummed!" quoth the two in one voice.

"I don't understand northin' about it," said Hiram plaintively. "But whatever it is, it has put me in a devil of a fix."

"If you're havin' any more trouble to your house than I'm havin' over to mine, then you've somethin' that I don't begrudge you none," added the cap'n gloomily.

"Woman left it," related Hiram. "It was in the edge of the evenin', and I hadn't come in from the barn. Reckin she waited her chance so't my wife would get holt of it. She did. She read it. And it's hell 'n' repeat on the Look premises."

"Ditto and the same, word for word," said the cap'n.

"The handwritin' ain't much different," said the ex-showman, clutching Sproul's letter and comparing the two sheets. "But it's wimmen's work with a pen—there ain't no gettin' round that."

Then his voice broke into quavering rage as he went on.

"You jest think of a lovin', trustin', and confidin' woman gettin' holt of a gob of p'isen like that!" He shook the crackling sheet over his head. "'Darlin' Hiram, how could you leave me, but if you will come away with me now all will be forgiven and forgotten, from one who loves you truly and well, and has followed you to remind you of your promise.' My Gawd, cap'n, ain't that

something to raise a blister on the motto, 'God Bless Our Home'?"

"It's done it over to my house," said the cap'n lugubriously.

"There never was any such woman—there never could have been any such woman," Hiram went on in fervid protest. "There ain't nobody with a license to chase me up."

"Ditto and the same," chimed in Cap'n Sproul.

"No one!"

"No one!" echoed the cap'n.

They stood and looked at each other a little while, and then their eyes shifted in some embarrassment.

"Of course," said Hiram, at last, moderating his tone of indignation, "when a man ain't had no anchor he might have showed attentions such as ladies expect from gents, and sometimes rash promises is made. Now, perhaps—you understand I'm only supposin'—perhaps you've got some one in mind that might have misjudged what you said to her—some one that's got a little touched in her head, perhaps, and she's come here. In that case it might give us a clue if you're a mind to own up."

The cap'n flushed at this clumsy attempt of Hiram to secure a confidence.

"Seein' that you've thought how it might be done all so quick and handy, showin' what's on *your* mind, I reckon you'd better lay down cards first," he said significantly.

"I think it's jest a piece of snigdom by some one tryin' to hurt us," proceeded Hiram, boring the cap'n with inquisitive gaze. "But you never can tell what's what in this world, and so long as we're looking for clues we might as well have an understandin', so's to see if there's any such thing as two wimmen meetin' accidental and comparin' notes and gettin' their heads together."

"None for me," said the cap'n, but he said it falteringly.

"Well, there's none for me, either, but there's such a thing as havin' what you've said misjudged by wimmen. Where the wimmen ain't strong-headed, you know." He hesitated for a time,

fiddling his forefinger under his nose. "There was just one woman I made talk to in my life such as a gent shouldn't have made without backin' it up. If she'd been stronger in her head I reckon she'd have realized that bein' sick, like I was, and not used to wimmen, and bein' so grateful for all that care and attention and kindness and head-rubbin', I was sort of took un-awares, as you might say. A stronger-headed woman would have said to herself that it wasn't to be laid up against me. But as soon as I got to settin' up and eatin' solid food I could see that she was sappy, and prob'ly wanted to get out of nussin' and get married, and so she had it all written down on her nuss-diary what I said, mixed in with temperature, pulse, and things. I——"

Cap'n Sproul's eyes had been widening, and his tongue was nervously licking wisps of whisker between his lips.

"Was that in a Bost'n horsepittle?" he asked, with eager interest.

"That's where. In the fall three years ago. Pnuemony."

"Mine was rheumatic fever two years ago," said the cap'n. "It's what drove me off'n deep water. She was fat, wasn't she, and had light hair and freckles across the bridge of her nose, and used to set side of the bed and hum: 'I'm a pilgrim, faint and weary?'"

"Damme if you didn't ring the bell with that shot!" cried the old showman in astonishment.

"Well, it's just ditto and the same with me," said the cap'n, rapping his knuckles on his breast. "Same horsepittle, same nuss, same thing generally—only when I was sickest I told her I had property wuth about thutty thousand dollars."

"So did I," announced Hiram. "It's funny that when a man's drunk or sick he's got to tell first comers all he knows, and a good deal more!" He ran his eyes up and down over Cap'n Sproul with fresh interest. "If that don't beat tophet! You and me both at that horsepittle and gettin' mixed up with the same woman!"

"This world ain't got no special big-



Mrs. Aaron sat in her front room with a letter in her hand, sobbing.

ness," said the cap'n. "I've sailed round it a dozen times, and I know."

The showman grasped the selectman by the coat-lapel and demanded earnestly: "Didn't you figger it as I did, when you got so you could set up and take good notice, that she wasn't all right in her head?"

"Softer'n a jelly-fish!" declared the cap'n, with unction.

"Then she's got crazier, and up all of a sudden and followed us—and don't care which one she gets."

"Or else got sensibler and remembered our property, and come round to let blood."

"Bound to make trouble, anyway."

"She's made it!" The cap'n turned doleful gaze over his shoulders at the chimney of his house.

"Bein' crazy she can make a lot more of it. I tell you, cap'n, there's only this to do, and it ought to work with wimmen folks as sensible as our'n are. We'll swap letters, and go back home and tell the whole story, and set

ourselves straight. They're bound to see the right side of it."

They departed promptly on their missions.

An hour later, impelled by another of those apparently simultaneous impulses, they met under the poplars and gazed at each other gloomily.

"I was just startin' for your house," mumbled Hiram.

"I was comin' over to yourn," said the cap'n.

"Was you tellin' me Gawd's honest truth about that nuss?" demanded Hiram. "I was straight with you. Was you straight with me?"

"I'll swear on a stack of Bibles higher'n Haman."

"And I believe you," declared Hiram. "'Cause you and me know just how we patched stories. But when I got down to my house and started in to tell it, with my wife settin' lookin' at me cold and calm, I swanny if it didn't seem like the all-firedest lie ever put up to a woman. I've heard 'em say that truth is stranger than fiction. She saw us up here talkin' a while ago, and swears we fixed up the whole story, and says it's so improbable a child wouldn't believe it. So now she's madder'n ever. Don't believe she'll ever take in another word I say."

"Ditto and the same with me," repeated the cap'n, in his gloomy monotone. "While I was tryin' to tell her, it sounded so fishy that for a time I didn't believe myself."

"'Truth is stranger than fiction,'" sighed Hiram. "We ought to have made up a good likely story. Wimmen like to be lied to."

"What in thunder are we goin' to do now?" wailed the cap'n.

"Ketch that nuss!" gritted Hiram.

"I'd jest as soon ketch the small-pox. It would be about as safe and sensible."

"Ketch her and salve her raw and wounded feelin's with a little cool cash was what I meant. I s'pose you'll be willin' to chip?"

"Ready and willin'," agreed the cap'n emphatically.

"Well," said Hiram, with the brisk-

ness of one who at last sees a way of contending with an unknown danger, "what we want to do is get one of the constables that we can depend on to keep his mouth shut, and have him mouse round this town and find where she's stoppin'."

"I reckon every constable's mad with me except Jackson Denslow, and he's too much of a puddin'-head to detect hair-oil on his own hair," said the first selectman in deep gloom.

"'In a time of desp'rit' need, lean on even a slender reed,'" quoted Hiram. "He ain't much of a talker about his own business, and that's the kind we're lookin' for. I'll call for you in my team, and we'll drive over and hire him."

That afternoon Constable Denslow started out, bristling with a curiosity that his employers did not appease. His mission was to find the abiding-place of a fat woman with light hair, a stranger in Scotaze. As to her garb, Hiram and Cap'n Sproul were a little uncertain, having received rather incoherent statements from their frustrated wives. But both agreed that she wore a long black veil and a tall feather in her hat.

At eight o'clock that evening Constable Denslow reported to Hiram and the cap'n in the security of the first selectman's office at the town hall.

"Been to ev'ry house in Scotaze, and to some of the nearest in Vienny, and there ain't no such woman been seen nor heard of, and them I asked was jest as surprised as I be that there is any inquiry for such a woman. I couldn't tell 'em why."

Constable Denslow bent fishy eyes of inquisitiveness on the two, and seemed to be expecting some elucidation.

"And the worst of it is you'll prob'ly never be able to tell 'em," said Hiram gruffly. "Here's your five dollars, and when we want you again we'll let you know."

"You never can judge what crazy folks is goin' to do," stated Hiram, after the officer had departed. "She prob'ly flew into town and then flew



out ag'in. Prob'ly she nussed a good many men that she fooled into sayin' the same things to her that we did. Bein' crazy over the subject, she's passed on to drop letters on their door-steps. We'll go home and let it blow over."

It was blowing when they arrived home, but it was not blowing over. Mrs. Hiram sat in her front room with a letter in her hand, sobbing. Mrs. Aaron sat in her front room with a letter in her hand, sobbing. Those missives were tossed at two wretched husbands as they entered, with the taunt that they must have missed their "darling" that evening at the meeting-place, for she had been there and thrown another letter on the front

The cap'n kicked him as he fled through the door of the office.

piazza—the same woman with the same dark veil and the tall feather. The sentiments of the letters were plaintive appeal, undying affection, and a spicing of bitter complaint.

"What did you say to her when she threw it at you?" inquired Hiram, at their conference next day.

"Northin'," answered the cap'n. "Didn't seem to be northin' to say to fit the case."

"Not after the way they took the truth when it was offered to 'em," agreed Hiram. "I didn't say anything out loud. I said it to myself, and it would have broke up the party if a little bird had twittered it overhead at a Sunday-school picnic."

That day Jackson Denslow, pricked by a fee of ten dollars, made a wider circuit, and made more searching investigation. It was almost a census. Absolutely no trace of such a stranger! Denslow sullenly said that such a domiciliary visit was stirring up a lot of talk, distrust, and suspicion, and, as he couldn't answer any questions as to who she was, where she came from, and what was wanted of her, nor hint as to who his employers were, it was being currently stated that he had gone daffy over the detective business. His tone of voice indicated that he thought others were similarly afflicted. He allowed that no detective could detect until he had all the facts.

It was an unfortunate attitude to take toward men, the triggers of whose tempers had been cocked by such events as had beset Hiram Look and Aaron Sproul. Taking it that the constable was trying to pry into their business in order to regale the public on their misfortunes, Hiram threw a town-ledge at him, and the cap'n kicked him as he fled through the door of the office.

That night each was met at the front door by hysterics, and a third letter. The mystery was becoming eerie.

"Dang rabbit her miserable pelt!" growled Hiram at the despairing morning conference under the poplars. "She must be livin' in a hole round here, or else come in a balloon. I tell you, Cap'n Sproul, it's got to be stopped some way, or the two families will be in the lunatic asylum inside of a week."

"Or more prob'ly in the divorce court. Louada Murilla vows and declares she'll get a bill if I don't tell her the truth, and when you've told the truth once and sworn to it, and it don't

stick, what kind of a show is a lie goin' to stand, when a man ain't much of a liar?"

"If she's goin' to be caught we've got to ketch her," insisted Hiram. "She's crazy, or else she wouldn't be watchin' for us to leave the house so as to grab in and toss one of them letters. Looks to me it's jest revenge, and to make trouble. The darned fool can't marry both of us. I didn't sleep last night—not with that woman of mine settin' and boohoooin'. I just set and thought. And the result of the thinkin' is that we'll take our valises to-day and march to the railroad-station in the face and eyes of everybody so that it will get spread round that we've gone. And we'll come back by team from some place down the line, and lay low either round your premises or mine, and ketch that infernal, frowze-headed sister of Jim the Penman by the hind leg and snap her darned head off."

"What be you goin' to tell the wimmen?"

"Tell 'em northin'."

"There'll be the devil to pay. They'll think we're elopin'."

"Well, let 'em think," said Hiram stubbornly. "They can't do any harder thinkin' than I've been thinkin', and they can't get a divorce in one night. When we ketch that woman we can preach a sermon to 'em with a text, and she'll be the text."

Cap'n Sproul sighed and went for his valise.

"What she said to me as I come away curled the leaves in the front yard," confided Hiram, as they walked together down the road.

"Ditto and the same," mourned the cap'n.

At dusk that evening they dismounted from a Vienna livery-hitch on a back road in Scotaze, paid the driver and dismissed the team, and started briskly through the pastures, across lots toward Hiram Look's farm.

An hour later, moving with the stealth of red Indians, they posted themselves behind the stone wall opposite the lane leading into the Look

dooryard. They squatted there, breathing stertorously, their eyes goggling into the night.

The cap'n, with vision trained by vigils at sea, was the first to see the dim shape approaching. When she had come nearer they saw the tall feather nodding against the dim sky.

"Let's get her before she throws the letter—get her with the goods on her!" breathed Hiram huskily. And when she was opposite they leaped the stone wall.

She had seasonal alarm, for several big stones rolled off the wall's top. And she turned and ran down the road with the two men pounding along fiercely in pursuit.

"My Gawd!" gasped Aaron, after a dozen rods; "talk about—gayzelles—she's—she's—"

He didn't finish the sentence, preferring to save his breath.

But skirts are an awkward encumbrance in a sprinting match. Hiram, with longer legs than the pudgy cap'n, drew ahead and overhauled the fugitive foot by foot. And at sound of his footsteps behind her, and his hoarse grunt, "I've got ye!" she whirled, and before the amazed showman could protect himself, she struck out and knocked him flat on his back. But when she turned again to run she stepped on her skirt, staggered forward dizzily, and fell in a heap. The next instant the cap'n stumbled over Hiram, tumbled heavily, rolled over twice, and brought up against the prostrate fugitive, whom he clutched in a grasp there was no breaking.

"Don't let her hit ye," howled Hiram, struggling up. "She's got an arm like a mule's hind leg."

"And whiskers like a goat!" bawled the cap'n, choking in utter astonishment. "Strike a match, and let's see what kind of a blamation catfish this is, anyhow."

And a moment later, the cap'n's knees still on the writhing figure, they beheld, under the torn veil, by the glimmer of the match, the convulsed features of Batson Reeves, second selectman of the town of Scotaze.

"Well, marm," remarked Hiram, after a full thirty seconds of amazed survey, "you've sartinly picked out a starry night for a ramble."

Mr. Reeves seemed to have no language for reply except some shocking oaths.

"That ain't very ladylike talk," protested Look, lighting another match that he might gloat still further. "You ought to remember that you're in the presence of your two 'darlin's.' We can't love any one that cusses. You'll be smokin' a pipe or chawin' tobacker next." He chuckled, and then his voice grew hard. "Stop your wigglin', you blasted, livin' scarecrow, or I'll split your head with a rock, and this town will call it good reddance. Roll him over onto his face, Cap'n Sproul."

A generous strip of skirt, torn off by Reeves' boot, lay on the ground. Hiram seized it and bound the captive's arms behind his back. "Now let him up, cap," he commanded, and the two men helped the unhappy selectman to his feet.

"So it's you, hey?" gritted Hiram, facing him. "Because I've come here to this town and found a good woman and married her, and saved her from bein' fooled into marryin' a skunk like you, you've put up this job, hey? Because Cap'n Sproul has put you where you belong in town business, you're tryin' to do him, too, hey? What do you reckon we're goin' to do with you?"

It was evident that Mr. Reeves was not prepared to state. He maintained a stubborn silence.

Cap'n Sproul had picked up the hat with the tall feather, and was gingerly revolving it in his hands.

"You're a nice widderer, you are!" snorted Hiram. "A man that will wear a deceased's clothes in order to help him break up families and spread sorrow and misery round a neighborhood, would be a second husband to make a woman both proud and pleased. Cap'n, put that hat and veil back onto him. I'll hold him."

Mr. Reeves consented to stand still only after he had received a half-dozen

open-handed buffets that made his head ring.

"There!" ejaculated Hiram, after the cap'n's unaccustomed fingers had arranged the head-gear. "Bein' that

jostled through the front door, and presented him before Hiram's astounded wife.

"Mis' Look," said her husband, "here's the lady that's in love with me,



The cap'n rolled over twice and brought up against the prostrate fugitive, whom he clutched in a grasp there was no breaking.

you're dressed for company, we'll make a few calls. Grab a-holt, cap'n."

"I'll die in my tracks right here, first," squalled Reeves, guessing their purpose. But he was helpless in their united clutch. They rushed him up the lane, tramped along the piazza noisily,

and that has been leavin' me letters. It bein' the same lady that was once in love with you, I reckon you'll appreciate my feelin's in the matter. There's just one more clue that we need to clinch this thing—and that's another one of those letters. The cap'n and I

don't know how to find a pocket in a woman's dress. We're holdin' this lady. You hunt for the pocket, Mis' Look."

The amazement on her comely face changed to sudden and indignant enlightenment.

"The miserable scalawag!" she cried. The next instant, with one thrust of her hand, she had the damning evidence. There were two letters.

"She ain't delivered the one to darlin' Cap'n Sproul this evenin'," Hiram remarked, persisting still in his satiric use of the feminine pronoun. "If you'll put on your bonnet, Mis' Look, we'll all sa'nter acrost to the cap'n's and see that Louada Murilla gets hern. Near's I can find out the rules of this special post-office is that all love-letters to us pass through our wives' hands."

In the presence of Mrs. Sproul, after the excitement of the dramatic entrance had subsided, the unhappy captive attempted excuses, cringing pitifully.

"I didn't think of it all by myself," he bleated. "It was what the Dawn woman said, and then when I mentioned that I had some grudges agin' same parties she wrote the notes, and the perffessor planned the rest, so't we could both get even. But it wasn't my notion. I reckon he mesmerized me into it. I ain't to blame. Them mesmerists has awful powers."

"Ya-a-a-as, that's probably just the way of it!" sneered Hiram, with blistering sarcasm. "But you'll be unmesmerized before we get done with you. There's nothin' like makin' a good job of your cure, seein' that you was unfort'nit' enough to get such a dose of it that it's lasted you a week. Grab him, cap'n."

"What be ye goin' to do now?" quavered Reeves.

"Take you down into the village square, and, as foreman of the Ancient and Honer'ble Firemen's Association, I'll ring the bell and call out the department, stand you up in front of them all in your flounces fine, and tell 'em what you've been doin' to their chief. I guess all the heavy work of gettin' even with you will be taken off'n my hands after that."

Reeves groaned.

"As first selectman," broke in the cap'n, "and interested in keepin' bad characters out of town, I shall suggest that they take and ride you into Vienny on a rail."

"With my fife and drum corps ahead," shouted Hiram, warming to the possibilities.

"I'll die here in my tracks first!" roared the captive.

"It's kind of apparent that Madame Dawn didn't give you lessons in prophesyin', along with the rest of her instruction," remarked Hiram. "That makes twice this evenin' that you've said you were goin' to die, and you're still lookin' healthy. Come along! Look happy, for you're goin' to be queen of the May, mother!"

But when they started to drag him from the room both women interposed.

"Hiram, dear," pleaded his wife, "please let the man go. Louada Murilla and I know now what a scalawag he is, and we know how we've misjudged both you and Cap'n Sproul, and we'll spend the rest of our lives showin' you that we're sorry. But let him go! If you make any such uproar as you're talkin' of it will all come out that he made your wives believe that you were bad men. It will shame us to death Hiram. Please let him go."

"Please let him go, Aaron," urged Mrs. Sproul, with all the fervor of her feelings. "It will punish him worst if you drop him here and now, like a snake that you've picked up by mistake."

Cap'n Sproul and Hiram Look stared at each other a long time, meditating. They went apart and mumbled in colloquy. Then the cap'n trudged to his front door, opened it, and held it open. Hiram cut the strip that bound their captive's wrists.

The second selectman had not the courage to raise his eyes to meet the stares directed on him. With head bowed and the tall feather nodding over his face he slunk out into the night. And Hiram and the cap'n called after him in jovial chorus:

"Good night, marm!"

THE FOURTH THAT SOUNDS AROUND THE GLOBE



THE first cannon-crackers exploded in celebration of America's glorious anniversary of independence are set off when the new day commences in the mid-Pacific, at Tutuila Island, our possession in the Samoan group. When it is dawn of July Fourth at Tutuila it is daybreak of the third at Honolulu, not a thousand miles eastward; this owing to the manner in which geographers and scientists have arranged the zigzag line up and down the Pacific where the day starts.

After Tutuila, the Philippines, the various foreign consulates, and the United States carry the roar of the Fourth almost around the globe; the citizens of our latest possession, the Hawaiian Islands, mark the end, and begin to celebrate the day that their immediate neighbors to the west have been making lively for full twenty-four hours.

There is no day, other than such religious festivals as Christmas and Easter, so universally celebrated the world over as the Fourth of July. In Japan and the Far East it is celebrated by Britons and Yankees alike. In London, at a recent Fourth of July banquet, William T. Stead was cheered to the echo by both English and Americans when he proposed that the day be made the great Anglo-Saxon holiday the world over, to be celebrated jointly by all citizens speaking the English language. In Asia this suggestion has already been adopted, with every seeming likelihood that it will spread around

the globe. Strange to say, however, the Anglo-Saxon is not alone in the desire to celebrate the glorious Fourth; it is becoming the occasion when the oppressed of every nation voice their desire for greater freedom.

It may be a coincidence, but the most successful revolutions of the world have taken place in July, so that Independence Day is celebrated almost everywhere some time between June 30 and August 1.

On July 1 Canada celebrates "Dominion Day," which almost amounts to commemoration of absolute independence. The United States follows closely with the world-waking noise of the Fourth. This is also the birthday of the republic of Siberia, the day upon which the Hawaiian Islands were annexed, and the anniversary of the receipt of Admiral Sampson's message that the Spanish war fleet was destroyed and Cuba freed.

In Europe, Italy celebrates the Fourth of July as the birthday of its liberator, Garibaldi, the Staten Island candle-maker, who dreamed of and almost accomplished an Italian republic. On the Fourteenth of July all France goes wild over the celebrations in commemoration of the fall of the Bastille and the birth of the first republic—again in July the insurrection that brought about the second republic was successful, and no child in France is permitted to forget these facts.

Even South Africa wakes up a bit on Jameson Day, July 28, and but for the

fact that the old raider who first started the rebellion against autocratic Kruger still lives, doubtless the event would be celebrated fittingly with fireworks and fire-water. Compact little Switzerland just missed becoming a July republic by a single day, as it was on August the first, in the year 1291, that the men of Uri-Schwitz and Lower Unterwalden entered into a defensive league that gave birth to the oldest of republics. Free Servia and Bulgaria, however, are July creations, the treaty of Berlin that made them independent of Turkey having been signed upon the thirteenth of the great republican month. Even Japan waited until July 17 to throw off the foreign yoke in 1899, and seems still half-inclined to celebrate Perry Day, July 14, when the Yankee commodore broke the power of the shoguns and made modern Japan possible. It is largely the example of America that has carried July around the world as the great republican month.

The lesser independence days have usually fallen in June. Just a glance at the June days that are, or should be, celebrated as independence anniversaries before we return to the noise of the glorious Fourth, that drowns out every other appeal. Cuba was untied from our apron-strings on June 12, and celebrates that date for her birthday as a republic. Norway demanded and secured her independence on June 7, and promptly cast aside the thought of becoming a republic. Russia celebrates the 7th of June as the birthday of Pushkin, the great apostle of freedom. England absolutely ignores the anniversary of the battle of Naseby, June 14, when Charles the First was defeated and the commonwealth established; instead, the statues of Charles are decorated with lilies on the anniversary of his death on the scaffold, and the churches hold services in memory of the royal martyr. Even Magna Charta Day, June 15, upon which all the rights of the English people are built, is passed in silence. These events should have occurred in July; evidently the time was out of joint.

The only semblance of Fourth of July festivities in the British Isles occurs on Guy Fawkes' Day, in November, when fireworks are set off and the small Briton rules the streets. June has not proved a successful republican month; and, as for April, the suppressed Hungarians remember that month only with grief and sad memories of their short-lived independence.

Nowadays, America is practically the last place where the Fourth is celebrated, but in the beginning it was first. The Declaration of Independence was really declared on July 2, 1776, at Philadelphia, by Continental Congress then and there assembled, but it was not until two days later that the delegates from the thirteen original colonies signed the famous document—and the colonies became States, and our country the United States.

It was John Adams who first suggested the present form of celebrating the Fourth. In a letter to his wife, written July second, just after the Declaration, he wrote:

The day will be celebrated by successive generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of the continent to the other, and from this time forevermore!

It was a strange coincidence that John Adams, the first to celebrate Independence Day, and Thomas Jefferson, who drew up the Declaration, both breathed their last upon the 4th of July, 1826, each crying almost with his last breath: "Independence forever!"

The first public celebration was held on July 8, 1776, in the yard of the State House, Philadelphia, John Nixon reading the Declaration to a great concourse of people. This was the origin of the custom that became common in every American town and village of reading the Declaration of Independence in public every Fourth of July. The first reading was followed by the lighting of a bonfire—the first "Fourth of July" fireworks. On July 9, New York, then a day slower than Philadel-

phia, celebrated the first Independence Day observed in the metropolis. George Washington himself read the famous document aloud, and ordered it read to all his troops, with the effect that they promptly tumbled down the statue of George the Third that then stood in Bowling Green.

At Morristown, in 1777, every soldier received an extra gill of rum on July the fourth, and in 1778 the whole army was ordered to cannonade upon the nation's birthday. Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, speaks of the beauty of the fireworks. Upon July 4, 1779, thirteen cannon, one for each State, were fired at West Point, and General Washington issued a pardon to every prisoner under sentence of death. With peace came the more boisterous celebration of the day; celebrations, however, that began to lack their pristine enthusiasm as the years rolled by; and then came that other conflict, and a new Independence Day for many of the States. Once more in the North the Fourth of July became the day of days, while in the South it fell from grace, and has never been restored to favor. After the civil struggle had ended, the South ceased to celebrate its own ill-starred day of independence, while the negroes, seeing the festivities of the invading army, presumed that the Fourth was Emancipation Day, and still celebrate it as such.

I recall a Fourth of July in the quaint old city of Charleston, when the doors and windows of the houses were double barred, and the streets given over to the negroes who came to town from miles around to celebrate the one day in the South that is theirs. All day long there were negro parades; the beautiful grass on the famous old battery park was trampled under foot and ruined; woe betide any white man who ventured forth toward evening when the "colored gentry" were well drunken with wine! From the upper piazzas the whites would watch the picturesque parades below; nor was the day without its attraction to those bold enough to wander forth. Of course, these irresponsible, happy-go-lucky colored citi-

zens were not permitted to experiment with fireworks. Crackers have no place in the South on the Fourth of July.

Every colored dame in Charleston prepares for the Fourth—in front of her "missus" house she erects her little booth or table, from which she dispenses home-made cake, ice-cream, ground-nut cakes, crullers, and pink lemonade. The city is gorgeous in color, for the negro woman decorates herself in crimson and purple for this occasion. Song and laughter resound the livelong day, until night, when even the least timid of the old-time darkies seek the protection of the master's house.

Some day the South may rescue the Fourth from the negro, but it is a very warm day south of the Mason and Dixon line for the white man to exert himself, besides, Christmas is the season for fireworks in the South, so that, doubtless, the peculiar characteristics of the Fourth of July celebrations in the two sections will long remain as they are at present.

To begin at the beginning of the Fourth, nowadays, one must sail westward from Tutuila. The first very noisy celebration begins in eastern Japan, where English, Americans, and Japanese all observe the day with noise and fireworks. I spent one Fourth in Yokohama. The consulates closed at noon, and the day was made a general holiday by the merchants and shopkeepers. Yacht-races were sailed in the harbor, horse-races run at the course, and even baseball played by experts of all nations. The hotels, than which there are few finer in the world, were elaborately decorated with the bunting of the stars and stripes. At the Grand Hotel, which is the largest in the Far East, the entire foreign population gathered toward evening to witness the fireworks. The emperor's Imperial Orchestra and a German band from one of the kaiser's war-ships in the harbor discoursed continuous music. Upon platforms on the street Geisha girls performed their dances, and upon the waters of the harbor strange Japanese fireworks darted hither and thither,

above and below water. For hours rockets ascended, red fires flared, and Roman candles exploded. War vessels in the harbor fired salutes, and altogether it was as noisy and hilarious a Fourth as one ever encounters in the States. A few days later the Japanese remember Commodore Perry Day, and on the 17th of July is their celebration of the anniversary of Japan's graduation from the tutelage of the "civilized" nations, but by common consent the Fourth is *the* holiday in Japan.

The celebrations of the Fourth at Manila are beginning to make both the Filipinos—and the Chinese take notice. It is a most patriotic affair, the Fourth, in our new possession—if all the noise a few thousand soldiers and saloon-keepers can make is any criterion. Much more quiet and orderly are the consular gatherings in Australia and New Zealand, where the Fourth of July falls in midwinter, these islands being south of the equator. Sometimes the Americans in New Zealand go skating on the Fourth, celebrating the day on the ice, while the Filipino boys drink all manner of things in vain attempts to keep cool.

In Vladivostok, Siberia, the celebrations of the Fourth commence almost simultaneously with those at Manila. The Americans in town gather at the Tikie Ocean (Pacific Ocean Hotel) about a Yankee dinner, at which farina takes the place of rice or hominy, young chickens in place of plump turkey, and imported beer in its proper place.

I recall one such dinner at Vladivostok. A friend had brought over five hundred bottles of American beer from Japan; they arrived just in time for the dinner, and with them was presented the government bill for duty—one dollar per bottle! Our young American host almost fainted. The American consul is always invited to these feasts—it is a part of the hilarity of the day; he is a negro politician from Ohio and an able man, but as there are invariably Southerners in town, the resident Yankees enjoy the sport of watching their faces when the colored member is asked to preside.

As for me, I found much more enjoyment during my stay in Vladivostok helping the Siberians celebrate *their* Independence Day, which falls upon June 7, Pushkin's birthday. This great Russian was exiled for writing a most daring "Ode to Liberty," and in 1825 he was one of the ringleaders in the plot to establish a Russian republic—needless to state that he is dear to the heart of every Russian exile. The city was gaily decorated with flags on the Pushkin Day I spent in Vladivostok. Public meetings were held, at which the officials themselves presided; freedom was in the air, even the school children taking part in the speech-making—it was the real Fourth of July in Siberia, and, needless to say, we Americans did all we could to help it out, even to firing guns and crackers.

The patriotic Yankee who follows the Fourth around the globe to India is hardly repaid for his trouble. In a land where Christmas is observed languidly beneath the shade of the trees, while a native stands by with the ever-waving fan, the Fourth of July is looked upon as a day on which the mere thought of additional fireworks becomes suggestive of infernal regions where the flame is never quenched.

Even in Panama the rebels had discretion enough to carry out their revolution on November 4, before and after the hour of siesta. And in South America midsummer was not selected for carrying out extensive revolutions.

In Africa, however, the Liberian Army, which numbers more officers than privates, parades in gaudy array on the Fourth, and the day is fittingly observed in South Africa by both Britons and Yankees, but then it is midwinter in July in South Africa. In Cape Town the two peoples dine together, set off fireworks together, and the ships in the harbor fire salutes. Last Fourth the Cape Town papers drew a parallel between July 4, 1773, in Boston Harbor, when the Americans threw the taxed tea overboard, and July 4, 1905, in Cape Town Harbor, where ship-loads of "trust" beef lay unmolested, while a refrigerating trust sat in

solemn conclave in London to again raise the price of beef in South Africa. It seemed as though South Africa was about to have cause to celebrate a "meat-party" and a Fourth of July all in one, but the Magna Charta having given every British subject the inalienable right to grumble, the day was celebrated by the press and public in this thoroughly British way.

Let not the globe-trotter who arrives in Italy upon the Fourth of July imagine that American independence is being celebrated. The street parades, fireworks, and general festivities are in honor of Giuseppe Garibaldi, who fought to make Italy a republic, and died regretting that he left it only a constitutional monarchy. The Italians are fully as demonstrative in their joy upon Garibaldi's birthday as are the Yankees in Yankeeeland when celebrating the birth of their country.

The French are artists to the tips of their fingers. They help the Americans in Paris to celebrate their Fourth, then turn around on the Fourteenth and show them how much better it can be done. On the Fourth, in Paris, the French lend the Americans the grave of Lafayette to decorate with wreaths, and even a member of the illustrious family to thank them in the name of France. Fireworks are permitted at the hotels, and the ambassador's reception, to which all Americans in Paris are invited, is made much of. No Frenchman is content until he convinces every Yankee of his acquaintance that Lafayette made America a republic as an example for France to follow—therefore the Fourth and the Fourteenth belong to both nations alike.

The Fourteenth of July in Paris! Election Day, Easter Parade, Fourth of July, and a hundred country fairs all rolled in one. Dancing on the asphalt street from morning until night, military review at the Champs Elysées by the president, free admission to the theaters, illumination at night that beggars description—these are the attractions that make the Fourteenth of July in Paris a day never to be forgotten.

At night every public edifice is out-

lined in flaming gas-jets. Along the river, the world's most famous buildings are mirrored in the Seine—palaces of light in its bed. Along the main boulevard, canopies of golden lanterns serve as bowers beneath which people dance. Music-stands are erected everywhere, and no one lacks for a partner in the waltz. Along the outer boulevards the itinerant shows of France are drawn up, the vans open, and gaudy attractions are displayed before the eyes of the bewildered multitude.

So great is the press of the crowd in Paris on the night of the Fourteenth that cabs and street-cars cease to run, and the dazed sightseer must find his way home afoot; but who cares to go to bed on the night of the Fourteenth? As well think of dispersing the crowd that gathers about Trinity in New York on the last night of the old year. All Paris turns out to celebrate the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. There are no firecrackers, no unusual noises, but it is doubtful if there be a man, woman, or child in the gay French capital on the Fourteenth who does not enjoy himself to his heart's content and the glorification of France.

Across the Channel in staid old England, the Fourth is celebrated in a most formal and ceremonial manner. The ambassador receives visits, makes his cut-and-dried speech at the American banquet, and the English speakers declare their undying love and admiration for the "dear Americans." There is nothing just like the American Fourth in England—the nearest approach is the Fifth of November, "Gunpowder Plot Day," when Guy Fawkes expected to blow up the king and Parliament. A body of soldiers still searches the vaults of the House of Parliament on the Fifth of November, and the small boy, dressed in odd clothing and hideous masks, still sets off crackers and burns the local obnoxious politician in effigy. In some parts of England local clubs make their own squibs that burn red, green, and blue, marching in a body at night through the streets, forming one of the most beautiful torchlight processions to be seen anywhere in the

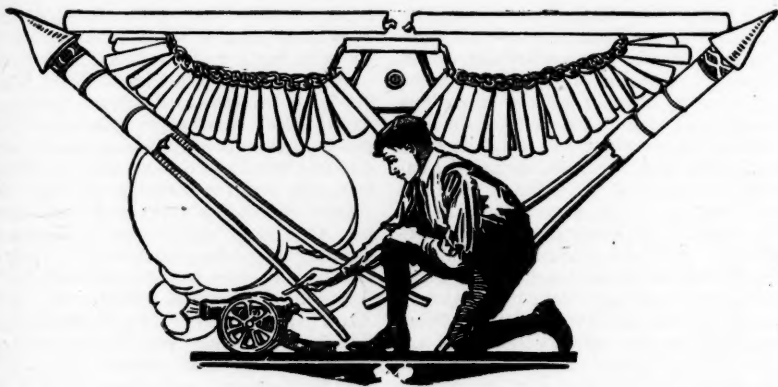
world. But the spirit of the Fourth is lacking in England; the people secured liberties on Magna Charta Day, and are quite content with the freedom they enjoy under a popular king.

Of course the Fourth of July banquets in London are over hours before those in New York begin; but then there is the Fourth of July on the Atlantic; a turkey-dinner with champagne trimmings, at the expense of the steamship company, and the speeches with the nuts and wine, followed by patriotic songs, sung standing, and then the fireworks from the foredeck; and few there are who have seen the showers of rockets and the red lights reflected in the waters of the Atlantic that will ever forget the glories of a Fourth at sea.

From end to end of the American continent, as John Adams predicted on the eve of the first Independence Day,

the sound of the Fourth is continuously in the ears of every American. The Alaskans carry it even half-way across the Pacific; and at Honolulu, where the last sounds of the glorious Fourth die out, it is as noisy a day as in New England.

At first the Hawaiians were puzzled as to which day they should celebrate—the Fourth with the country to which they were annexed, the 7th of July, when the islands became a republic, or August 12, when the American flag was raised and annexation took place; but, as the island republic is merged into that of Uncle Sam, and the natives look sadly upon flag-raising ceremonies, the Fourth has been adopted by all, and the last pop of the firecrackers on that night in Honolulu marks the end of Independence Day, until another national birthday begins with the setting off of fireworks at Tutuila Island.



Mistakes Our Teachers

NO life might useless prove or vain
 If each would wrest from loss a fee,
 And, of his own experience, gain
 Some wisdom through adversity.

EUGENE C. DOLSON.

THE GIRL WHO JOURNEYS! TO THE WEST ALONE

by Annette Austin

ILLUSTRATED BY
WARREN B. DAVIS



"IT'S a perfect little beauty," I cried, holding aloft the tiny revolver and viewing its bright sides exultantly, while my heart beat high with the anticipation of some daring adventure in which I should be called upon to use it. "Do you know, Jack," I burst out, "I have *always* wanted to own a revolver."

It was Jack's doing—the buying of it—but now he eyed me doubtfully. Then he said with that delightful show of proprietorship, which he likes to assume before strangers who don't know that we are nothing more than an "engaged couple":

"Virginia, if you are going to be a foolhardy young person with that revolver, you had better stay at home. For the second time I repeat it—you had better stay at home."

"For the second time?" I mocked shrilly. "For the *two hundredth* time!"

"Well, for the two hundred and oneth time, then. You are certainly tempting fate in crossing the continent alone—"

"Time!" I called, with no small show of irritation. "I have had enough of your curtain-lectures, Jack Parker. You remind me of my grandmother, always preaching against a girl's traveling alone, as if it were some kind of monstrous social crime. And you a Yankee, too, with sisters who do as they please!"

Jack's only answer to this was a shrug of the shoulders, for which I

was devoutly grateful. Certainly he had made the air blue enough many times before with his lurid pictures of the dangers that awaited an adventurous young woman like myself, who insisted upon seeing the world firsthand and alone.

He could not appreciate that this was the chance of a lifetime. The *Era* had commissioned me to work up a popular article on farm life in southern California, touching on the future of government irrigation of dry lands in the West (really a very masculine subject!) I was to have my expenses, transportation, and time to visit friends in Texas on the way out.

"Think of living on a real cattle-ranch!" I exclaimed. "Where the front door is forty miles from the front gate! And of traveling by stage over mountain routes, where one may expect to be held up by real bandits any day—*enough!*" And I shivered deliciously.

Jack frowned instead of smiled at the prospect. He had all an Easterner's scorn of the sensational. Nevertheless, he was by nature prudent, and he warned me plainly.

"It's just this way, Virginia," he said, giving me his sensible man's view of the matter. "A woman is perfectly safe on the beaten track out West—or

any other place in America—ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, but it is just that hundredth chance which may come to you in an ugly experience, and I want you to go prepared.”

The outcome of this advice was the meeting at Spalding's and the purchase of the Smith & Wesson, .32-caliber, hammerless, self-cocker.

“Bear in mind,” said I firmly, “that in taking it, I concede none of your silly argument about the dangers of traveling alone. I take it for *novelty*. And, as for traveling alone, I believe it is not only safe, but pleasant—entirely pleasant—and that American men are as chivalrous as they ever were.”

“Bravo!” answered the laughing Jack. “Spoken like a politician. Well, so be it. I turn you over to Don Quixote of the plains, and I hope you will find him as nice as Lord Chesterfield of Manhattan. But there is one thing—” And here he came close and raised a warning finger, and distinctly over his shoulder I could see the solemn ghost faces of his prim New England ancestors. His voice was pleading: “Virginia, *please* don't talk to strange men on the train!”

It was too funny. The St. Louis Limited was slowly moving out. I was leaning from a window of the Pullman. Around me were the well-bred icebergs of the sedate East. I made a grimace at Jack. Poor Jack! It was the last exasperating glimpse he had of my disappearing countenance.

As far as St. Louis there was no temptation to disregard his parting injunction. The icebergs attended strictly to their own business. But the plunge into the Western city cracked the complacency. And through the crack I saw gloomy, gruesome forebodings of that hundredth evil chance.

The Southwestern Limited was late, as usual—four hours—and I had exactly one minute and a half to make my Texas connection.

“They won't wait for you,” confided the melancholy conductor. “Them through trains don't wait for nobody; they get out on the dot. So you better skip when we get into the shed.”

And skip I did, or, rather, I was skipped, for no sooner had the wheels of our train ceased to turn, than I was grabbed unceremoniously from the platform by a pair of strong arms, borne through the air, and deposited with a bump upon the step of the waiting train.

A lantern waved; a voice shouted, “All aboard!” and with a swirl of glory the Patty Flyer was off on the dot.

“Deplorable lack of formality,” I commented to myself breathlessly, and I hoped the icebergs hadn't seen. But this was, the West, the precipitate, spontaneous, irresponsible West, and I was prepared for that hundredth chance in any form.

After the spectacular exit, I found it didn't matter much whether we got over ground or not. The important thing in the West is to make a good start, and after that to take it easy. That through train played hookey half the way to the coast, and the people aboard didn't care any more than if they were going to a picnic.

Most of them had been to one—and retained the marks of it—I perceived when I entered the crowded sleeper. It was a farmers' alliance returning from a convention in St. Louis. The men, who were rough-looking and half-tipsy, had their feet on the cushions, some with their shoes off. They were shouting coarse jokes to each other, and one, more boisterous than the rest, was amusing himself by pulling the feet of and otherwise teasing his sprawling, barelegged, twelve-year-old boy. The women, who were tired and frazzled-looking, were busy with the babies, who were squalling, and the older children were doing gymnastics over each other and down the center aisle.

They all looked up with amused interest at my entrance. The disgust must have showed plainly on my face, for the group of men, among whom I was forced to seat myself on the only available space, began in a maudlin way to take notice of it. Frightened, tired, alone, I clenched my teeth and sat rigid, waiting for the conductor, to ask for a transfer to another car. What

would I not have given at that moment for a protector! Seeing the world was not half so spicy as it had seemed a few hours back, and I could find nothing diverting in this crowd of coarse men, one of whom openly leered in my face, and made remarks I tried not to hear.

In despair I sought out the conductor. "I can't stay in that car," I said. "I'm afraid."

"The other sleepers are equally crowded," was the curt reply. "I'll attend to you when I get time."

It rested at that, although when I returned, I found that the men had withdrawn, and I had the section to myself. Later, the most maudlin of the bunch was put off the train, and gradually things quieted down, but I slept not a wink.

In the morning the men were sober, meek, and seemed anxious only to keep out of the way. I was rather ashamed of my fears of the night before. These seemed harmless, simple folk, and I noticed with amusement that the man who had been the most boisterous was now the most careful and considerate of my presence. The sprawling small boy was chastised into quiet with the elaborate severity that only the natural reprobate knows how to employ in reform. He was yanked up from the floor and dragged down from the tops of seats with equal vehemence. His hair was smoothed and his collar straightened at least forty times, and his expletives, which were fully as highly colored and frequent as his father's the night before, were strangled in their birth, and with a covert glance in my direction.

The women were of the class where reticence in regard to one's affairs is regarded as just cause for suspicion. They were frankly curious as to my name, my destination, and my object in traveling, and, because I dodged the issue, whispered audibly that I was a Northerner, adding: "Yankees air queer, ain't they?" It was hardly worth while to draw comparisons between the manners of these rural folk and their Eastern counterpart, for the farmers of Missouri and Kansas are a composite

lot, and recruited from all quarters of the globe. They dropped off during the day all along the route into superb fields of golden grain, and by afternoon I was alone except for a sweet-faced little woman, whom I hadn't noticed before, and who sat quite alone gazing out of the window, and with her hands crossed in her lap.

Toward five o'clock a well-dressed



They all looked up with amused interest at my entrance.

passenger got on somewhere in the territory. I paid scant attention to him, except to notice that shortly after he got on he spoke to the little woman, and she drew away sharply, as if annoyed.

I was thinking of the noble stretch of country through which we were passing, and of the atmosphere of bigness and broadness that this part of the West appears to infuse into its people. And it seemed to me that never before had I so thoroughly felt that great boon of freedom, which is America's gift to its men and women.

Suddenly I saw the man approach the little woman again. This time he deliberately sat down beside her and



A tall ranchman asked me to join him and his friends in a game of cards.

made some remark, to which she replied quickly and angrily. For a minute they held a low-voiced altercation, and then he moved off.

When he had gone she came over to me, and her face was very white, and her hands were trembling.

"Did you hear what that man said to me?" she added, in a frightened whisper.

"No," I replied. "What was it?"

But she refused to tell me. "May I sit here beside you?" she implored. And when I said she might, she seemed relieved. We talked along pleasantly for some time, not again mentioning the occurrence, although she continued to glance with alarm toward the end of the car, as if unable to shake off the dread of the man's return.

Later, when she had resumed her seat, and the porter passed through the car, I saw her beckon him to her.

"Are you on duty in this car at night?" she asked earnestly.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the porter.

"Well, I want you to be," continued the woman in the same tense voice. "I want you to be near and within call, do you hear?"

"Yes, ma'am; all right," answered the darky obediently, giving her a puzzled glance.

That was all. The incident had passed from my mind. I must have been dozing in my first sleep about twelve o'clock, when I felt some one part the curtains of my berth, and, looking up, I beheld the drawn face of the little woman. "please," she was saying, "won't you come and stay with me a while. I am so afraid."

She was so plainly unnerved, that I asked her to come into my berth, but she insisted that we go to hers. Once settled there, she put her face close to my ear, and whispered: "Just now the porter knocked on my berth and said, 'Here's the beer, lady.' 'What do you want?' I said; 'I never ordered any beer. You've made a mistake.' But

he wouldn't go. 'It's number seven, ain't it?' he said again crossly. 'Gemen said number seven.' 'Go away,' I said, as angrily as I could. 'I don't want any beer.' Now what does it mean?" she ended hoarsely, clutching my arm.

I assured her that she was unduly excited, and that it was evidently a mistake, intended for another car, and possibly the porter was sleepy. I calmed her as best I could, but when she became quiet, I slipped out softly and got my pistol, and came back again. In some way she had communicated her fear to me.

It was only a few minutes after this that the curtains of the berth were drawn aside very stealthily, and the head and shoulders and right arm of the man were thrust into the opening. I was on the outer edge, and I sat up instantly, with the pistol in my hand, and poked it squarely into his face. The light fell on the metal sides and made them glisten. I remember thinking in a dull sort of way, "How dramatic!" but I only said in an extremely quiet voice—hardly more than a whisper: "What do you want here?"

The man withdrew without a word. Whether he was too startled to make an excuse, or whether he thought it was

unnecessary to make one, or whether he *had* made a mistake, I did not know. And I don't know to this day. But I do know that the man was a prominent official of the road over whose tracks we were then running; and I know that a gentleman recently said to his daughter in regard to traveling on that road, that if she were ever in need of assistance, she had better call on any stranger rather than one of the train crew.

The next morning the man had disappeared. The train was bowling along over glorious, bright prairies, and the air was full of good, clean, joyous sunshine. The little woman and I became fairly well acquainted, and, among other things, we talked of the dangers of traveling alone.

"The world is full of big, fine, generous people," she said; "and I have never before in my life had an unpleasant experience in traveling, although," she added, "I have been on the road enough to know. I am a book-agent," she explained, with a little smile that trailed off into a

wisp of sadness. "Then surely you must have noticed," I suggested anxiously, "whether in general the men of the Western States are more or less courteous toward unattended women than those one meets in the East."

We had concluded between us to let

the incident of the night before stand as of sufficient unusualness not to count in an average, although it had served a worthy purpose in toning down my too arrogant optimism.

"They are neither more nor less courteous," was the prompt reply. "But they are different. Everybody is different in the West—even the Easterners who come there absorb the atmosphere at once. There is something in the air—more room to breathe—more room to *feel*." She threw her arms wide in a gesture of abandon, and smiled up at me in delight at her utter frankness. "Don't you understand?" she said. "Men and women out here in the big open States have a feeling of relationship to each other that you don't find in that you-attend-to-your-affairs-I'll-attend-to-mine attitude of the crowded Eastern States? They are not afraid to enjoy life—or to be *interested in each other*."

"And there's another thing," she went on. "The women of the West take life comfortably—as the men do."

They have not the harassed expression of the Eastern woman—life is not at all strenuous—and they don't push themselves in a crowd. Western men say that Western women are more *modest* than Eastern women, and that is why in the most crowded cars in Denver, Salt Lake, and San Francisco



"Move this car up at once, sir," came the commanding voice.

a woman always gets a seat. Whereas, with your Eastern women—why, the other day in New York I saw a tired laborer give up his seat to a befeathered lady, and, instead of thanking him, she drew out her pocket-handkerchief and dusted the seat off before she took it!"

I admitted the justice of that argument. "But what of the Westerner's rudeness?" I asked.

"That is quite as frank as his kindness," she said, laughing; "and sometimes so precipitate as to make you gasp. The native Westerner is like Topsy, you know, 'just growed,' and he doesn't waste time beating around the bush to let you know what he wants."

Of this I had speedy proof.

It was after we had got into Texas and the little woman had left me, that a tall ranchman, wearing a broadbrimmed felt hat, came over and politely asked me to join him and his friends in a game of cards. "It's a good way to Houston," he explained, matter-of-factly, "and we thought you might be lonesome."

The directness of the appeal amused me, and I couldn't help comparing his method with that of the Eastern man, who would spend hours concocting a neat strategy by which to scrape acquaintance.

Despite the fact that I had been assured that Western men were quick to take up the cudgels in a lady's cause, I found pretty generally that, unless it was out in the open country, they were quite willing to ignore the issue if it promised any unpleasant notoriety for themselves. But in San Antonio, where the atmosphere is a delicious blend of Southern warmth, Western vim, and Mexican color, I was struck with the manner of a handsome old gentleman, who came to my rescue one day on a street-car, when an especially churlish conductor insisted upon setting me off in the mud.

"I can't get off here—move up a little, please," I said, as the car stopped in the middle of a pool of water.

"Get off or get on," shouted the con-

ductor, taking hold of my arm roughly and preparing to thrust me off.

"Move this car up at once, sir," came the commanding voice of a soldierly-looking man within the car, and in a moment he was beside me, with his grip on the conductor's collar, and, ringing the bell himself, sent the car clear of the water. Then, stepping off politely, he assisted me to alight, and returned to the car. But alas! even in that short glimpse, I saw that he was an officer from the military post, and an Easterner. So much for a typical instance!

In Arizona, however, I got my first glimpse of the real West, with its picturesque figure of the cowboy, and of his daredevil delight in doing things that are bizarre.

At Tucson two stalwart fellows came aboard, followed by half a dozen of their comrades in jingling spurs, broad hats, and neckerchiefs. After inspecting the car to their satisfaction, the six bade their friends good-by, and returned to their horses, to spend the remainder of the time doing equestrian stunts for the entertainment of the travelers.

I was standing on the platform bargaining with some Indians for a beautiful Navajo blanket. I had just made my selection, and sent one of the Indians with a twenty-dollar bill to the ticket-office for change, when the train began to pull out. The little Indian darted from the depot and sprinted manfully for the train, but it was gaining on him rapidly, and I was viewing with despair my lost silver, when one of the cowboys made a sudden dash for the Indian, grabbed the money, and made after the train at a full gallop, followed by all the other five, shouting and waving their hats.

For two hundred yards the race kept up, until finally, with a powerful swerve of the body, the cowboy laid the money in the outstretched hand of his friend, who was clinging to the car step. Whereupon the six horsemen rose in their stirrups and let out a great whoop, with much laughter and waving of hats.

Trembling and laughing, I stumbled back into the car, followed by the two



For two hundred yards the race kept up.

cowboys carrying the blanket. For the rest of the day they entertained me with rousing tales of the cattle country, escorted me out at all meal-stations, and altogether proved most entertaining traveling companions.

The other passengers had become acquainted by this time, as people will on these long overland journeys, and it was interesting to pick out the Easterners from the Westerners and Southerners by their manner. The three

Easterners, who were evidently "drummers," kept rather to themselves, although they were always civil; but the Westerners, with noisy jocularly, were back and forth through the car, pointing out features of the landscape, inaugurating games, and joking the ladies.

It was not long, however, before we had an opportunity of contrasting the innate courtesy of the men. An accident blocked the train for eight hours

in the desert, and, while all the men piled off immediately in search of food and drink, it was only the Eastern "drummers" who were thoughtful enough of the famished women left behind to bring something back with them.

It became necessary before long, also, to curb the zealous affability of the cowboy travelers. They were gentlemanly fellows, but they did not have that delicate sense of the limits of a casual acquaintanceship, which an Easterner seems born with. And there is just where the Westerner differs from the Eastern man in his traveling manner. Not content with little passing courtesies, he must perforce inquire into your plans, your antecedents, and your addresses. Painful as was the operation, the cowboys had to be snubbed, and snubbed hard.

At the end of the journey, when the train, six hours late, was drawing into Los Angeles at midnight, it was again the Eastern drummers who, with quiet thoughtfulness, moved among the ladies asking whether they expected to be met; and, finding that I did not, the three of them asked permission to see me safely to my hotel; which they did.

Everywhere in the West I noticed the open-hearted generosity and good-will of the Western men toward women. They were willing to accept them on an equality, to fulfil their obvious duty wherever it appeared; but where the situation called for conscious unselfishness, or for delicate tact, they fell short of the demand. They would give up a seat in a street-car, but ride a bicycle down the middle of the sidewalk; they would take off their hats in an elevator, but neglect to remove their cigars in a crowd.

During my stay in California, I asked the question often and variously of farmers, ranchmen, and city people, as I had asked it in Texas, whether it was considered safe for a young girl to travel alone in the West, and almost invariably I received the answer: "Un-

doubtedly it is, but it is not customary for her to go unattended. There are always plenty of men around, and it is easy to furnish her with an escort."

That "plenty of men around" epitomizes the situation in the West. There are four men to one woman everywhere, and that partly accounts for the seeming good treatment she receives. A woman is more or less of a *novelty* in the West, and as such is regarded with timid curiosity, and some reverence. She goes escorted usually, not because it is the proper thing or the safe thing, but because it is the easy thing, and the natural result of a superfluity of men.

It was in the middle west States, strange to say, that I found most strongly accentuated the characteristics which are presumed to be distinctly Western.

It was there, in Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis, that I found the pushing woman and the pushing man—and fate take care of the hindmost! How I ever got out alive from the crush in the Chicago terminal, where I was to change cars on my way back to New York, I hardly know. But it was to stumble face forward, flushed and bedraggled, into the arms of the redoubtable Jack himself, who was headed Westward, having heard of the San Francisco earthquake, and fearing that my adventurous spirit might lead me into new and dangerous fields.

I think I welcomed him with more than seemly warmth. At any rate, there was a covert note of triumph, as well as of sarcasm, in the tone with which he asked, after I had got my breath:

"Was traveling alone quite as pleasant as you anticipated?"

"Yes, it was," I answered stoutly. "It was safe—and—yes, pleasant, but"—here I hesitated—"I think after this," I mused, "I would just as soon have—well, some one for *company*, you know."

Whereupon Jack merely smiled an inscrutable smile.



For Art's Sake

BY WINIFRED ARNOLD

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

"TOM," said Patty, with her most entrancing smile, "I'd like you, if you please, to propose to me."

"Great Scott, Patty!" I cried, in unfeigned amazement, "what for, I'd like to know? I've been doing it regularly for the past three years, and it doesn't seem to have made any impression. Why repeat the agony?"

"Well," said Patty, with that distractingly confiding little air of hers, while she paid great attention to crossing one tiny slipper-toe over the other, "I'll tell you, Tom. It's a secret, a great, great secret, but I know I can trust you."

"Wild horses sha'n't drag it out of me," I protested solemnly.

"Well," said Patty again, uncrossing the slipper-toes and glancing up at me, "you see, Tom, I'm writing a love-story—you promised not to tell—and I've come to the proposal part, and though I'd had one or two"—Patty couldn't help twinkling at me as she said this, for I myself had done the deed about twenty-five times, and there were always others—"I thought I'd like to have it quite fresh in my mind when I wrote it. So, Tom, if you wouldn't mind, I'd be so much obliged!"

"Patty Randolph!" I ejaculated, "have you the nerve to sit there and

invite me to propose to you just to be turned down and written up for the magazines in cold blood?"

Patty twisted her fan nervously. "Why, no, Tom," she said. "You don't understand. It isn't in cold blood. It's for—why, for art's sake, you know. Nobody would know who it was, and I just thought it would seem so much more lifelike if a real man was saying it to me."

"Oh!" I remarked, with unavailing sarcasm. "You were intending to take it down on the spot, were you? Do you write shorthand, or would you like me to line it out, as they used to do the hymns?"

This was lost on Patty.

"Oh, no," she replied innocently. "I thought I could remember till you were gone. It's pretty late now, you see, and I waited till the end of the evening on purpose."

"Patty," I sighed, "you are perfectly incorrigible."

Patty brightened perceptibly. She always takes any word over three syllables as a compliment.

"So you will, Tom, won't you?" she cried joyfully. "I knew you wouldn't mind, and it will be the greatest help on my story."

"Look here," I said grimly, "you call this perfectly fair and square, do you? Just the way you'd like to be treated if you were a poor devil like me?"

"Oh, yes," cried Patty, elated; "perfectly fair. And I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll call you Jack in the story, and then nobody will ever guess. Go on, Tom, please!"

"Very well," I replied, a sudden scheme flashing into my brain, "since it's you, Patty, and just to oblige. Will you, Miss Randolph, consent to enter with me into the state of holy matri-

mony, and to honor my name by appending it to yours?"

"No, indeed, I won't!" flashed Patty decidedly. "Nobody would, if you asked like that. Why, that would sound perfectly horrid in a book. Can't you do it nicely—the way you usually do?" Then coaxingly: "Don't you think you could possibly put a little ardor into it?"

"Oh, that's it?" said I. "Add a large spoonful of ardor and serve hot. All right, here goes: Angel of my dreams, come to me arms! They pine to enfold you." Here I dropped upon my knees and beat my breast and tore my hair in the approved tragedian manner. "Dearest of women, be mine, be mine! Speak up, will you, Patty?"

"No, no, no! You *horrid* thing!" cried Patty, in crescendo, stamping her foot. "You will just spoil my story entirely, and I'll *never* forgive you. Oh, Tom, I didn't know you'd be so mean." Then her tone again became coaxing. "Please be good, Tom; you can make such nice proposals when you try. Just once more."

"Not much, Patty," I said firmly, "unless you change your part of the program. Here I've done it twice, and you've plumped out a 'No' without even an attempt to soften the blow; and I'm not going to propose again unless you promise to say 'Yes.' That's flat. I've been turned down about often enough for one evening."

"Oh, well," returned Patty, dimpling, "I promise. If you'll do it once more, just as nicely as ever you know how, I'll say 'Yes' in my very sweetest manner. Though what earthly difference it makes, Tom, whether I say 'Yes' or 'No,' I can't see."

"Difference!" I ejaculated. "It makes all the difference between——" but something in Patty's look stopped me. "Oh, er," I said, "well, I'll tell you, Patty, strictly on the Q. T., you know." I leaned forward confidentially. "You see, I'm writing a book, too, and my girl's going to accept the fellow, the way any decently kind-hearted girl would!" I paused meaningly, but Patty only dimpled, so I continued:

"Now, of course, I don't want her to say 'Yes' plump out, just as a man would, and you're the one to tack on all the feminine subtlety business and playing off and all that sort of stuff, don't you know?"

Patty sprang from her chair with her cheeks very red and her eyes blazing.

"So that is what you meant, is it?" she cried. "That's why you've been proposing to me! That's why you wanted me to say 'Yes'! Just so you could write it up in a book with all the proper feminine touches! And you call yourself a gentleman!"

Patty's voice broke between scorn and wrath, and she dropped back into her chair with a little catch in her breath that was almost too much for my resolution.

"But, Patty," I said humbly, "don't you remember? You were getting me to propose, just so you could write it up yourself, and you said that was quite on the square, you know. It's for art's sake, like yours. What's the difference?"

"All the difference in the world," cried Patty hotly. "If you had the least bit of sense or delicacy, you could see! To get me to say I would marry you just to put it into print for all the world to see! Oh, I'll *never* forgive you, never!"

"But, Patty," I argued, "that's just what I said to you, and you declared it was perfectly fair. Besides, it isn't as if you were in earnest."

"Well, I'd like to know how you're so sure I mightn't be in earnest this time! But, anyway, it's all over now. I have no use for *cads*! We will say good day, Mr. Tennant!" And Patty rose regally from her seat and swept me a stately curtsy of dismissal.

I also rose. "Patty," I said sternly, "sit down, and don't be silly! We're going to quit fooling and get down to business for once. You've promised to say 'Yes' to me, and, by Jove! you've got to do it. For the last time, then, Patty Randolph, will you or will you not marry me?"

Patty resealed herself with obstinate-

ly closed lips and elevated chin. It was a fight to the finish, and I knew it.

"Patty," I reiterated through my closed teeth, "you promised, and you know you never break your word."

Patty's eyes blazed at me for a second, then she dropped her lids. "Oh, very well, if you put it that way," she said icily, "I will, Mr. Randolph. Now, please go and write it up in your book." And again Patty rose; this time with an unmistakable little sob in her throat.

"Bother the old book!" I shouted, swooping down upon her exultantly. "You can't send me away now, Patty. Why, what's the matter, dearest?" For Patty was weeping upon my shoulder.

She tried ineffectually to push me away. "Noth—nothing," she sobbed. "Only I do so hate

to be disappointed in people, and you're one person I've always believed in! And I've thought all this time that you really loved me, and it was just that hateful old book! I loathe people who write! Oh, let me go, please!"

"Patty," I cried, "you adorable little goose! Why, there isn't any book, dearest. There isn't anything but you. There never was. I just patched that up to get you to say 'Yes.' And now you've said it, nothing on earth shall ever make me let you go!" I proceeded to demonstrate this remark by reducing Patty's small person almost to pulp in my ardor.



"I loathe people who write! Oh, let me go, please!"

"Oh, Tom," she gasped, "do let me go just one minute! I can't breathe; truly I can't."

With many apologies, I deposited the small lady in her chair, but stood guard watchfully lest she should try to recover breath and liberty at the same moment.

Patty panted ostentatiously, and dimpled so bewitchingly that nothing but iron self-control prevented another onslaught.

"So there's no book, after all?" she inquired archly. "And you just tricked me into saying 'Yes'? Aren't you ashamed of yourself, you dreadful old

deceiver? I've almost a good mind to take it all back!"

"You can't," I announced triumphantly. "And all's fair in love and war. But are you going to put it into your story, I'd like to know?"

Patty glanced up at me shyly, and then glanced away again. "Why, Tom," she stammered—"why, that is, er—well, I haven't my story all written yet. That is—I haven't *really* written it at

all. It was an idea, you know. I was thinking it out—you see, Tom"—and her mouth broke into a smile in spite of herself—"you see, you hadn't proposed to me for very nearly two months, and I was afraid you were getting out of practise."

"Patty!" I cried. "You little— Well, I don't care whether you have any breath left or not!" And in about one minute she hadn't.

The Autograph

WE strolled together, I and she,
Hand held in hand;
I wrote my name reflectively
Upon the sand.

Her attitude, as she stood there,
Some chance has saved
To memory, looking down to where
My cane engraved.

She stood beside me, looking down,
And neither spoke;
No breath beneath the gray cliff's frown
The silence broke.

Before our eyes from their next sleep
Woke on new day,
The name by fringes of the deep
Was brushed away.

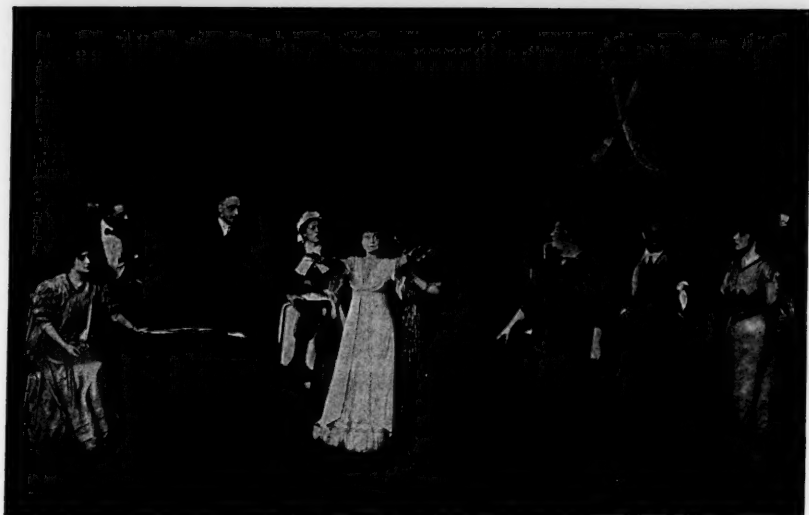
We parted soon and met no more,
On through the years;
The while no echoes of that shore
Assailed our ears.

At last we met, and I knew her
At once; but she
Remembered not. A little stir
Winced over me.

My blood felt just a thought of chill;
I drew my cane
Along the pebbles:—idle will,
No touch of pain.

She looked down at its tip: the name
Writ on the sand
Before her eyes in memory came.
She took my hand.

EDWARD LUCAS WHITE.



ELSPETH'S AWAKENING

The Road to Yesterday

This story presents, in narrative form, the play which made so marked a success when presented at the Herald Square and Lyric Theaters, New York, during the past season with Minnie Dupree in the leading rôle. "The Road to Yesterday," which was written by two American women, Beulah M. Dix and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland, is so much out of the common in its charm that the editors of SMITH'S MAGAZINE feel themselves especially fortunate in being able in this manner to present it to their readers.

IT was midsummer's eve of the year 1903. Elspeth Tyrrel, her cheeks flushed and her temples throbbing, was lying on a couch in an alcove off the studio trying to sleep. Through the half-drawn curtains she could catch a glimpse of the dim-lit studio beyond—its polished floor, the model throne with its lay-figure, the great andirons in the fireplace. She could catch the glimmer of the antique weapons on the wall, and hear in drowsy, far-off murmurs the voices of those in the adjoining room. Malena, her sister who had married an English artist, Will Leveson, was there. So was Aunt Harriet, with whom she had crossed the Atlantic to visit her sister. Then there was a funny, tubby little Englishman, Adrian Tomkyns, whom she had met that day. Adrian was good-natured, had lots of

money, and was trying hard to have an artistic temperament. Elspeth laughed sleepily as she heard his voice.

There was another man out there at whom she did not laugh—Kenelm Pawlton. He was big and good-looking, and carried one arm in a sling. He had been very kind to her, and he was a clever man, and yet something—his eyes, or perhaps the cruel line of his mouth, made her dislike and fear him. He was a friend of Eleanor Leveson, Will's sister. Malena said that he wanted to marry Eleanor, but that Eleanor refused him for no reason in the world but her own capriciousness.

Elspeth's head was in a whirl. She felt, as she lay there listening to the throbbing in her temples and the lowered voices outside, that she had been living in a dream. For years, ever

since Malena had married Will Leveson and gone to live with him in his studio in Kensington, she had been looking forward to this trip, dreaming of it and reading—Scott and Bulwer, Stevenson and Conan Doyle and Stanley Weyman, historical novel upon historical novel; what had she not been reading?

And now it had actually come to pass. She was in England, in old England, the England of Elizabeth and Raleigh and Cromwell, of Ivanhoe and Amy Robsart and Mary, Queen of Scots; of a thousand personages who had been crowding through her fancy. It was two days since a very seasick and excited little girl had come ashore from the *Lucania*; and such a two days! Elspeth had the slenderness and enthusiasm of eighteen. She was a sight-seer whose perseverance was limited only by her physical strength, and whose ardor and interest had no limits whatsoever. She was unconscious of the fact that she was pretty and attractive. She was too much interested in other things—and *such* things as she had to be interested in! The Tower, the Charterhouse, the Abbey, St. Giles' and St. Bartholomew's, St. Paul's, and the Burlington Arcade, eleven picture-galleries, Lincoln's Inn, a lunch at the Cheshire Cheese, London Bridge, and the Parliament houses—Elspeth had done all of these in one day, and when, after nightfall, she had arrived at the studio, tottering but ecstatic, Aunt Harriet had decided that she was seriously ill, and must go to bed at once. Elspeth had objected, and as a compromise she had consented to lie down in the alcove on condition that she be awakened at midnight to partake of a studio supper.

Norah, the maid, had told her that all wishes wished on that night came true, and Elspeth was wishing that she might go back three hundred years and see the old England of her fancy. She was very happy in spite of her fever and weariness, and she was interested in the conversation in the adjoining room. Oddly enough, the talk that filtered in to her through the curtains was in accordance with her own thoughts. They

were having tea, and "Tubby" Tomkyns, in the intervals of descanting on his ability to butter toast, turn out thirty-foot canvases, and be artistic generally, admitted that he believed in reincarnation, and that he himself must have lived and breathed hundreds of years ago.

"I believe it," said Malena, with a flash of her dark eyes. "Three hundred years ago I was a gipsy, slept under a hedge by night, and tramped the English woods by day. I had a knife in my belt like this on the wall"—Malena snatched an old knife from its hook—"and I could use it." She thrust it out with a sweeping gesture.

"By Jove!" said Kenelm Pawlton, "I believe you did! You know how to handle one without being taught, you gipsy. How much are you in earnest?"

"It's hard to say, Ken. Sometimes it's just all fancy to me—and then—by times—when I see a long road going over a hill—"

"I know—just as sometimes I feel a black something face me, and it says 'Look! I once was you. And what you earn you must pay! Through lives and lives, through hells and hells, till the will that made has unmade.'"

The others looked at him curiously. If Malena had been half-jesting, Kenelm seemed wholly in earnest. His heavy jaw was set hard, his face was dark and moody, and he was looking steadily at the far wall of the studio. Eleanor glanced at him strangely, and dropped her eyes. For an instant there was a strained silence. Adrian Tomkyns broke it, much to the general relief.

"I," he said, in his fat, unctuous voice—"I think I was Oliver Cromwell. There's somethin' strange about it, just as Ken was sayin'. Since I've been paintin' Oliver Cromwell on a ten-and-a-half-foot canvas, on his way to the scaffold—"

"Whose scaffold?" said Kenelm, who had come out of his black mood and was smiling at "Tubby."

"That isn't the point," said Adrian hurriedly. "It just came to me. I seem to understand him so well, don't

you know—I must have been he before! Why, the other day when I looked in the glass I was *startled!*"

"I don't wonder," said Aunt Harriet, smoothing out her voluminous silk skirts.

Elsbeth smiled to herself, and altered her position on the couch, stretching out her slim figure luxuriously. "Aunt Harriet likes to jump on people, and she's commenced on poor Mr. Tomkyns already," she thought.

She could see more plainly through the opening in the curtains now—the opposite wall of the studio and a door leading into the passage beyond. It was open, for the June night was sultry and breathless. Conversation had ceased. Kenelm, with his back toward her, his head sunk forward, was staring at the wall before him. Elspeth wondered what it was he saw in his mind's eye; what it was he thought. She glanced at the dark square of the door, then opened her eyes wider and stared. A man had appeared there suddenly. Elspeth raised herself on one elbow and looked at him.

He was tall and young and splendid. Most wonderful of all he was dressed not in evening clothes as was Mr. Tomkyns, nor in summer lounging clothes like Kenelm. He wore a buff leathern jerkin and trunk hose, a broad belt at his waist, with a knife thrust through it; a scarf knotted loosely about his big throat, and a tattered Spanish hat shoved back from his brow. His hair was a crisp brown, and his eyes an honest, steady blue. The sweep of his shoulders, the easy grace of his figure, something indescribably old world about him, made the girl gasp and clutch at her throat. In a moment he was gone.

Elsbeth looked and looked again, rubbing her eyes and pushing the curtains aside. She was wide awake now. The blood had ceased to riot in her veins; her head ached no longer. She was *expecting* something—she knew not what. She surely had seen the man—and yet what could such a man be doing in twentieth-century Kensington? And he was real!



MALENA

She was still looking steadily at the door when the conversation in the studio broke in upon her ears again. It

irritated her now. She wanted to be alone—to think, and to wish herself back three hundred years—back in the lost time where that man came from.

"I think," said Aunt Harriet, in a loud, complacent voice, "that if I ever lived in the flesh before I was Mary, Queen of Scots."

Elsbeth stirred restlessly on her couch. One of the cushions fell to the floor with a soft rustle that was heard in the room beyond. Malena set down her tea-cup and rose to her feet.

"I hear my little sister stirring," she said; "we must go out and let her sleep."

"That child is seriously ill," said Aunt Harriet, rising with a rustle of silk petticoats. "A hot, midsummer day, and your awful London chill at twilight—"

"Sure, it's midsummer eve that's ailin' her," said Norah, the maid, as she cleared away the tea things. "It's wishin' to see the ould sights she is, to see the ould selves of her, on the night when there's those watchin' and listenin' that—"

Norah's voice died away to a mumble. She was aware that Aunt Harriet was favoring her with a look which meant indubitably that her silence would be preferred to her speech. She was a very old maid, lined and bent a little. She continued mumbling as she went slowly from the room.

"I believe she's a witch," said Elspeth, under her breath. "She knows what I think and how I feel. The others don't."

Malena raised the curtain and looked at her little sister. Elspeth seemed very slim and very young, with her fluffy blond hair spread out on the cushions and a spot of pink in the center of each cheek. Her eyes were closed, and she was breathing regularly.

"Poor little girl," said Malena. "Fast asleep! Let's go out and leave her. We'll waken her for the midnight supper!"

Elsbeth felt the light grow dimmer, and heard their footsteps as they left the room. She was glad when they were gone.

II.

Elsbeth turned and pushed aside the curtain. Could it be possible that her wish would come true, or was she only feverish and overtired? It was a modern, every-day, twentieth-century Kensington studio. The splendid man in the buff jerkin must have been imagination and overstrained nerves—and yet this was midsummer eve, and the man had seemed so real and human, so familiar—and here was the answer to her question!

For, as she watched, she saw with a strange dizziness the studio wall become luminous. She could see through and beyond it. There was outdoors—a pleasant English landscape, familiar and strangely unfamiliar at the same time—a white road that wound up over a hill. There were English fields and English hedgerows—a bright morning sun, and an old English inn, with latticed windows thrown wide open to let in the fresh morning air. There were swallows twittering in the eaves of the old house, and a girl standing in the road before it—a girl with fluffy yellow hair and a green kirtle. Elspeth had seen that girl before—yes, she remembered now, *it was in her mirror*.

She was Elspeth! Gone back on the road to yesterday three hundred years. And where was the Elspeth who was lying on the couch in the studio? She had faded and gone, somehow, lost being and consciousness, gone with the studio and all it contained, with all her friends, into the limbo of things yet to be—a place much vaguer and dimmer and far off than the place of things that have been and are no more.

Elsbeth turned about in bewilderment, fingered her coarse dress, and pushed back her hair, which was hanging about her ears and in her eyes. She became aware that her hands had coarsened and roughened, and were sadly in need of the services of the manicure. Then she saw the man in the buff jerkin. He was swinging along the road toward her, his head thrown well back, and a great cudgel in his hand, singing as he came. Here

was the messenger who had come to lead her on the road to yesterday. She stepped toward him, and he ceased his song.

"What art thou, wench? What's to do?" he asked cheerfully.

"Oh, my soul!" gasped Elspeth, drawing back as he stepped closer. "Who are you? Where am I?"

"What's amiss wi' ye, sister?"

"I'm lost," said Elspeth. "Where are all the others? I'm lost."

"Lost!" said the man in the buff jerkin. "Here's safety and shelter." He flung his arm about her and half-lifted her from her feet. He was big and strong, but certainly free in his manner. She had never known a man who had acted this way before. She was inside the inn with him in an instant.

It was a strange old place, with an enormous fire at one end of it. The chairs in the room were incredibly heavy and clumsy; the table a few rough boards thrown across trestles. The room itself was untidy, and looked as if it had not been swept in a long time. Across the ceiling were oaken beams black with smoke.

There, in front of the fireplace, stood Aunt Harriet. But was it Aunt Harriet? She was the same, but changed sadly, coarser and rougher, her face red and shining, her hands red and capable, with large, bony knuckles. Standing beside her was Mr. Tomkyns—but where was his Tuxedo coat and white shirt-front? This Tomkyns looked nervous and frightened; he wore patched clothes and a soiled white apron. Just as Elspeth entered the room, Aunt Harriet, who did not seem improved in temper by a passage backward through the centuries, struck him a resounding box on the ear, and sent him staggering.

"You was thrift, you changeling, you idle vagabond!" she was screaming, when her eyes fell on Elspeth. "And here you are back again, Mistress Gad-about!" she said.

"Why, Aunt Harriet," said Elspeth, "you here, too!"

"I am no aunt of thine. I—Mistress

Phelps, of the Red Swan, kin to such as thee!"

She advanced angrily toward Elspeth, who was expecting no such reception. The man in the buff jerkin stepped between them.

"You know this little wench?" he said.

"Know her!" said Aunt Harriet. "She hired herself here as a serving lass."

"I didn't!" said Elspeth.

"What, give the lie to me!" said Harriet, making a rush at her. She would have struck her had not the man in the buff jerkin swung her around in his arms, talked to her for a moment in words and in an accent which Elspeth could not follow, and ended by kissing her.

"He's certainly free in his manners," thought Elspeth; "rather too free."

"Bess, thou art forgiven," said Harriet, turning from this embrace without the faintest sign of embarrassment. "Come, you gipsy! Where are your good manners? Give thanks to the good gentleman that spoke for thee."

The man in the buff jerkin started to kiss her in the most matter-of-fact way in the world. Elspeth eluded him with a scream, and Harriet, whose hot temper returned suddenly, set to ordering her about in the most violent manner. With only a vague idea of what she was doing, Elspeth found herself pumping water into a heavy pail, dragging it into the room, and finally scrubbing away at the tiled floor with a bunch of ancient rags, which Harriet called a "clout." The man in the buff jerkin, whose only apparent name she had learned by this time was Jack, was calling loudly for pasties and other eatables, and declaring that his "bully," "Will 'wi' the Feather," had promised to meet him at the Red Swan Inn in Brockden-Under-Trent to drink ale with him. Harriet was bustling about, carrying enormous meat pies and bottles, and poor Mr. Tomkyns was scurrying about feverishly and aimlessly, nervously dodging a blow, when Harriet came near him.



"OH, MY SOUL!" GASPED ELSPETH, DRAWING BACK AS HE STEPPED CLOSER. "WHO ARE YOU? WHERE AM I?"

Elspeth had heard of light and heavy housekeeping, but this style of keeping house was infinitely heavier and more laborious than anything she had ever imagined or deemed possible. This dream was not a nice dream, by any means. The only nice thing in it was Jack, and he was a little strange sometimes in the way he swung Harriet about and kissed her. But he was good-tempered, at least. The dream was distressingly real, the bucket was real, the water was real; the smack that Mr. Tomkyns that moment received for dropping a bowl of dough was horribly real, as were his groans and protestations.

Jack rose from the chair where he had been sitting. Elspeth looked at him. Every properly constructed historical romance has a hero, and no man that Elspeth had ever seen before fitted the part of her ideal half so well.

"You're not going," she said, starting toward him impulsively. "Don't leave me."

Jack looked at her in kindly astonishment. "Thou art with thy friends now, little wench," he said. "But I only go to sleep. I was afoot all last night. I only go to sleep for an hour." He yawned widely and strode off.

Elspeth watched his broad back vanish through the dark, inner door

with a sinking heart. He could not be the hero that she was looking for—no hero would leave her in that fashion to go to sleep. She had never heard that heroes needed sleep particularly at any time. And yet he was the only person that she liked in the whole dream. Aunt Harriet had turned into a coarse termagant with a terrible temper and a crimson face. Tomkyns did not know her, and was too frightened to answer her when she spoke to him. She noticed that he eyed her askance, and edged nervously away from her when she moved near him.

He would have been funny had she been in the mood for laughter, but Elspeth was nearer to tears than to laughter. This dream, this journey back on the road to yesterday, was so horrible, so unlike what she had imagined and hoped for, so squalid and unpleasant; worst of all, so terribly real.

It was the horrible reality of it that was the hardest to stand. She pinched herself on the arm with a mad hope that she might wake up. She felt the pinch, she was sure that she was real flesh and blood, but there was no waking. She would pinch some of the others. They could be nothing but phantoms of her imagination. Tomkyns passed close to her at the moment, mopping his brow with his dirty wisp of apron. Elspeth pinched his fat arm, and drew back. The immediate result was a wild yell from Tomkyns.

"Our Bess is mad," he shouted, rubbing his arm. "She's mad. She talked wildly all morning, and even now she sprang on me and mangled and tore my arm."

The crimson of Aunt Harriet's cheek paled a little. Slowly and cautiously she began to edge toward Elspeth. Elspeth tried to persuade her that she was not a dangerous lunatic, but to no purpose. Harriet's cure for lunacy was a whip and a dark chamber. She had just driven Elspeth into a corner when another figure entered the room. It was Norah, the maid, only a more disreputably seedy Norah than that individual had ever imagined in her twentieth-century days.

With a wild scream of mingled relief and terror Elspeth threw herself into the arms of the old woman, who, flinging a protecting arm about her, drew her to her bosom and warded off Harriet with the other hand.

From the noisy conversation that followed she learned that Norah was Mother Gillaw, reputed to be a witch and a proven thief, but still with a great reputation as a compounder of medicines and charms. It was this reputation that saved Elspeth for the time being, for Norah was dreaded as a witch, and seemed to have a friendly feeling for her.

"I wished a dreadful wish," said Elspeth, "on midsummer eve. Oh! help me to unwish it."

"What's wished on midsummer's eve must be unwished on midsummer's eve," said Norah; "to-morrow eve at dusk."

A whole day more! The tears coursed down Elspeth's cheeks. It was a terrible dream, and so real. Things were happening about her so really. "Will wi' the Feather" appeared, vaulting in at the window, and proved to be no other than Will Leveson dressed in Elizabethan plumes, and with a blank stare for Elspeth as she passed him, hoping against hope that he, at least, might know her.

A dreary hour had passed when Tomkyns proclaimed the fact that Lady Elinor Tylny was coming. Lady Elinor appeared. She had been Eleanor Leveson back in the studio in Kensington. Elspeth sprang toward her, and saw, to her great delight, a look of sad and kindly recognition in her eyes.

"Leave this maid alone with me for a moment," she commanded, and the others stepped away respectfully. When they were alone once more she turned her eyes upon Elspeth. The face above the great Elizabethan ruff that confined the throat was very sad.

"You know me!" cried Elspeth. "Oh, Eleanor, you know me!"

"Surely I know you," said Eleanor sadly, shaking her head. "This disguise does not serve with me, Lady Elizabeth Tyrrel."

Lady Elizabeth Tyrrel! Elspeth's heart was like lead within her. So that's who she was. There was no use struggling with this terrible dream any longer. Eleanor was not herself. Every one had changed. She had changed. In a kind of dull stupor she heard Eleanor's voice talking, and listened. She learned that she was Lady Elizabeth Tyrrel, the heiress of one of the richest estates in England; that she had fled here in disguise from her guardian, Lord Strangevon, who wished to marry her for her money. Lord Strangevon was already married—and to Eleanor. But he was so great a lord that he could set this aside and force Elspeth to marry him. Even now his foresters were searching for her high and low.

"I am going now to Strangevon Castle," said Eleanor, as she arose. "Perhaps I may help you yet."

She swept out to her coach, the horses of which had been changed. Elspeth was awakened out of her stupor by Harriet's loud voice calling on her to attend to Jack Reformado, who looked like her hero and was not, and his friend Will.

They ate with knives, holding chunks of heavy meat pies in their hands, and sitting back in their chairs with their feet sprawled out before them. Elspeth shuddered as she watched them. She was called from them by the appearance of a magnificent gipsy girl, with a knife at her belt. Her face was the face of Malena, and the knife was the knife that hung on the studio wall in Kensington before she had traveled on the road to yesterday. Malena did not know Elspeth, and pushed her from her with a sneering laugh.

The next instant another party arrived without the inn. They were foresters of Lord Strangevon; big brown men with clubs and knives, swaggering and swearing, calling for wine and ale. Elspeth shrank back as they swaggered in, but the eye of the foremost fell on her keenly. In an instant he had sprung forward and seized her by the wrist, drawing her toward him and scanning her face. Then he burst into a loud yell.

"'Tis the Lady Elizabeth," he cried, as the others gathered about him.

Malena stepped forward and laid her hand on his arm.

The next instant there was a terrible uproar. Elspeth, screaming wildly, could not tell how it happened. Malena had suddenly stabbed the forester in the arm. Jack and Leveson had dashed forward together, and for the moment there was a struggle that filled the room with men, cursing horribly and fighting ferociously. She heard Jack call for help as no hero should ever call, and saw Will flash forth a sword and spring forward, cutting and thrusting.

Then, as if by magic, the room was quiet again. The foresters had gone. Harriet was in the other room bewailing the calamity that had befallen her inn, Tomkyns was nowhere, Will and Malena had gone without, and she was alone in the room with Jack, the big man.

She looked at him. How she wished that he had been the hero—but, of course, he wasn't. It was too bad. There was something about his glance that made her flush and feel happy and frightened at the same time. As he drew nearer she felt her heart beat faster. Then before she knew what had happened his arm was about her waist, and she was nestling close to him, as close as though he had been the real hero, and he was asking her to take the road with him to the nearest priest, and to travel with him forever after that, and she was ready to say yes, when she could speak again—

"So!" Some one had entered behind them. Jack wheeled with an oath. A man who had the face of Kenelm Pawlton stood in the doorway; but the face was different. Strong as Kenelm's face was, but crueller and coarser. He stroked his boot with the heavy riding-whip.

Jack's hand went to the knife at his belt.

"Lord Strangevon!" he cried. Even as he spoke there was a rush of men toward him through the open door—foresters of Lord Strangevon. Elspeth screamed again, for her hero had leaped

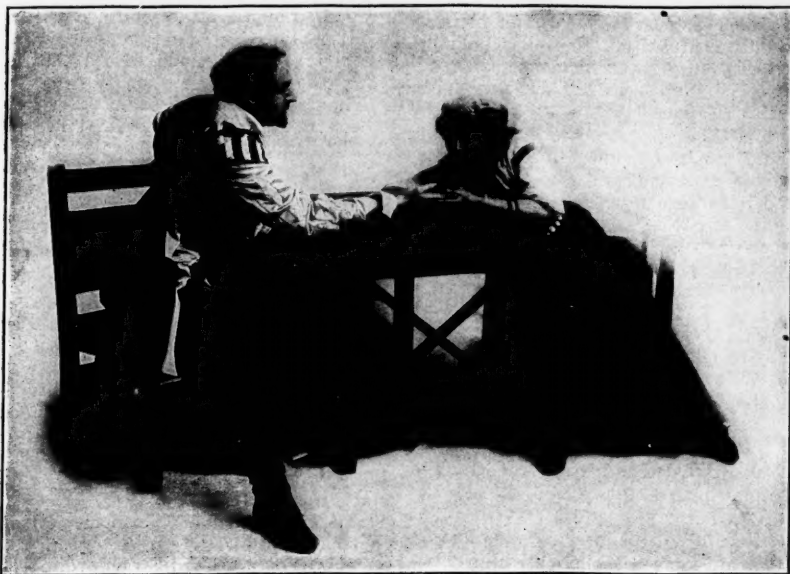
through the window and fled like a deer down the dusty road.

III.

It was drawing toward dusk of the following day. Elspeth had slept and awakened, but the dream was still the same; no dream, but terrible, brutal reality. Haggard and pale, she was seated in a room in Strangevon Castle. The studio and all it had once held for her, all the dear twentieth-century life,

In twelve days she would come of age and be her own mistress, but before that time she and all her wide estates would be Lord Strangevon's to do with as he pleased. Lord Strangevon was in need of money.

There was only one ray of hope, and that was held in the crumpled paper that she clutched in one hand. It was a note from Jack Reformado, misspelled, most unheroic, but true and manly. It begged little Bess to have



"WHAT YOU EARN YOU MUST PAY," CAME THE LOW GIPSY VOICE

seemed the faintest and most far-off dream now.

Below her was the castle moat, the wide greensward, and the deer forest. In every appointment of the room about her, in every happening of the day, was some grim reminder of the horror of this present life. She had seen Norah almost drowned as a witch in the moat beneath her by a howling mob. She had listened to Lord Strangevon and looked into his cruel face. She was his prisoner, he meant to marry her at dusk.

faith in him and to place a candle in her window if she wished his help. If she wished it! The candle was burning there now, though it was not yet dusk. At the far end of the room was Malena who had offered to tell Lord Strangevon's fortune for him and in the meantime had slipped the note to Elspeth without so much as giving her a single glance from her black, gipsy eyes.

Now she was bending over Strangevon's hand muttering things that were familiar to the girl as they came to her dull senses. Fortune-telling has al-

ways been fortune-telling, and has sounded much the same through all the centuries. Strangevon was to have his will and yet not have all his will.

"What you earn you must pay," came the low gipsy voice, "through lives and lives, through hells and hells, till the will that made has unmade."

Had not Elspeth heard those words before, muttered by Kenelm Pawlton himself, in the studio that now seemed so far away? There was something strange and uncanny in the slowly dropping English twilight. In an hour it would be dusk, but then it would be too late. Could the wish that had been wished be unwished at dusk on midsummer's eve?

The door closed behind Strangevon and Malena. Another smaller door in the oaken paneling swung silently open and Jack Reformado stood in the room. With a little, glad cry Elspeth had leaped to his arms. She cared nothing for heroes now. This was Jack, her Jack. His strong arms were real flesh and blood about her. For a moment she clung to him, then sprang to the window to draw the curtain.

"Wilt come with me?" said Jack, holding her hands again. "To the priest?"

"Yes, Jack."

"Now that thou art a great lady and no more the little wench at the ale-house?"

Elspeth caught his hands the closer.

"I am only a foolish little girl, lost in a dream," she said, "and you—the only one that I have never seen before—have been so good, so good." For a moment they were silent; then Jack turned to the window.

"No sign of Malena yet," he said. "She is to give us sign with a lantern when the coast is clear. Then we will slip down that secret stair."

As he spoke there was a sharp click in the silence of the dark chamber. Jack moved to the little door to wrench it open. It was fast. He was tugging at it with all his might, when there was a noise of footsteps on the stairs without, a blaze of torches in the room.

There stood Strangevon, a score of his men behind him.

For a moment Jack leaned against the wall. Then he fell on his knees.

"Pardon, lord, I cry you mercy!" he said. "I am a thief. I broke in here to steal."

"No, no! Not that!" cried Elspeth.

She knew why he was saying this, and realized now that he was a hero, a real hero.

For answer, Strangevon picked up the note which lay crumpled on the ground, glanced at it, and handed it to Elspeth.

"You play the wanton, and this is your playfellow," he said.

The insult had scarce left his lips when Jack was at his throat, knife in hand. Three men hurled themselves upon him. A moment later he was lying on the ground, bound hand and foot, and Strangevon was looking at a long slash in his velvet sleeve which had caught the force of the blow.

Things were swimming dizzily before Elspeth's eyes, she felt herself lying back in a chair, and she could hear Strangevon's voice coming out of the mist that surrounded her. She was to marry him then and there on condition that he was to give orders that Jack should not be put to death or imprisoned. She tottered to her feet.

"Say no, dear Bess, say no," said Jack from the floor.

Elspeth looked at him. He was a hero indeed now.

"I will marry Lord Strangevon," she said. "God be with you, Jack, my dear! my dear!"

She saw him dragged from the room and saw the black-robed priest enter. She heard his voice drone through the marriage service and heard her own, as it were another's, in the response. She felt Strangevon's cold hand on her arm. It chilled her to the bone; but she forced herself to stand steady under the touch. Had she not saved her hero! He was free now.

The priest passed out, and more candles were brought. Then came the sound of scuffling footsteps on the stair. Men were carrying something into the



AS HE STRUGGLED THE PROSTRATE FIGURE RAISED ITSELF BY A SUPERHUMAN EFFORT TO ITS KNEES, THEN TO ITS FEET

room, and Strangevon was looking at them with an ugly smile curling his lips. They carried a bundle, indistinguishable at first. Elspeth looked away from it, gripping hard at the carved oaken chair beside her.

"Look up, my lady," said Strangevon, "the men have gone. Look at the wedding-gift they have brought thee."

Elspeth looked, and then all went black before her. She screamed once, and after that it seemed that she must choke. It was Jack, bleeding and senseless, lashed and cut with a hundred cruel blows.

Strangevon's arm was about her waist and he was struggling with her. As he struggled the prostrate figure on the ground raised itself by a superhuman effort to its knees, then to its feet. With a choking groan it staggered toward Strangevon, who turned, to see a dagger flash in his face and receive it to the hilt in his breast. He

crashed backward on the floor, and Jack, staggering and blood-stained, caught at Elspeth's hand.

"The door, little Bess, the door," he said, as she clung to him. "I feigned death. Black Malena gave me the knife as I lay. We will yet escape."

She saw him struggling to pull open the door by which he had been trapped before, and as she watched she was conscious of some change in the air about her, some indefinable thing that made her start away from Jack and cry out.

"It is unwished," she said, "the dream is unwished."

She saw the door open before them and the dark passage beyond. Then she felt herself sinking and struggling under some dreadful weight. She was asleep and trying to awake. She struggled with the dream that held her prisoner and murmured inarticulate things.

Before her the wall grew luminous



WILL-WI'-THE-FEATHER

the polished floor, the armor on the walls.

It was a few minutes before twelve in the studio. Jack Greateorex was there alone putting the finishing touches on the table, which was set for the midnight supper. He was a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, and he looked especially picturesque at the present moment inasmuch as he was clad in a buff jerkin and hose of the Elizabethan period. He was blue-eyed and brown-haired, he walked with a swing, and the old-world clothes seemed as though they had been made for him and he had worn them all his life.

It was for this reason that Will Leveson, his chum, had induced him to pose as one of the figures of his picture, "The Bulwark of England." He had given him a sitting that evening in another studio, and had not as yet changed into his ordinary costume.

He was not thinking of his clothes at that moment, being more interested in Malena's little sister just over from America, who was asleep in the alcove behind the curtains. He had not met her yet, but he could hear her moaning in her sleep and stirring uneasily at that very moment.

"Poor little girl," he muttered, as he drew the cork from a claret bottle. "She must have had dreams. Funny things, dreams; I've had the same one over and over, night after night. It's always the same, and always stops at the same place."

He stood still for a moment and recalled his dream. He had been in a

once more, and now she could see through it and beyond it the studio at Kensington, with the model throne,

dark passageway struggling to get a door open. The door had been a door that he must open; it meant escape from death for himself and the girl who was clinging to him. She was a little girl with fluffy hair. He wondered if there ever was such a girl; he hoped that he might see her some time. He raised his eyes from the floor where they had been fixed and saw the girl, in the flesh, standing before him. Elspeth had arisen from her sleep and stepped from the alcove into the studio.

"Oh, Jack," she said, "you're safe! You're safe! The door opened at last."

She held out her arms and moved toward him.

There are moments in every man's life when he acts on impulse, and not on reason, when some power apparently higher than himself guides his actions, when he has no time to think what he is doing and no wish for thought. A moment such as this had come to Jack Greatorex. The girl of his dream was in his arms, and he had kissed her. She had the same fluffy hair; she clung to him in the same way. She was calling him by his first name and asking questions that he could not quite understand. But it all was natural and right. They had known each other for hundreds of years. He remembered how her eyes had always looked now that he saw them again, he knew the soft, clinging touch of her arms about his neck, now that he felt them once more. There had never been a time in his life when he had not known this girl.

Suddenly as she lay in his arms the expression of her eyes changed from concern and tenderness to bewilderment. She drew away from him.

"Who are you?" she said, stepping back and looking about the studio.

"Jack Greatorex, Will's chum, you know—and you're Elspeth Tyrrel."

"But those clothes?"

"I just had them on to pose in. Don't be frightened, please."

"Then you're not the Jack in the dream, and I——" she covered her face with her hands.

Jack Greatorex had been sharing her bewilderment for a moment, but now blind impulse and instinct seized upon him again and hurled him forward.

"The dream!" he said. "I was in the dream. Don't act so. Listen to what I say, even if it does sound jumbled up. You'll listen, won't you?"

Elspeth nodded.

"I'm speaking the truth now if it does sound queer."

"I believe you've spoken the truth for three hundred years."

"Then, see here. If you saw me in a dream, we were both dreaming. I've been there a hundred times in that room with you."

"What room? Oh, what room, Jack?"

"A dark old room, with tapestries on the wall, and a candle and a table."

Unconsciously they had drawn together once more, and now they talked, both at once sometimes. They had both been in the same dream, it was wonderful but true, they had known each other three hundred years, they had clung to each other in the darkness even as they were clinging, when Aunt Harriet, Mr. Tomkyns, and the rest trooped into the room and stood aghast in a deathly silence.

Jack Greatorex broke the silence.

"This is a peculiar thing," he said, "and it requires a whole lot of explanation. It would take too long to explain it all, but the fact of the matter is—we didn't want it to come out till next Tuesday—but we're engaged."

"Catch me, somebody!" gasped Aunt Harriet.

"Oh, Aunt Harriet," said Elspeth, "it's not really as sudden as it looks. We've been engaged for three hundred years."

Aunt Harriet heard her not, however. For the first time in her life she had fainted.



THE PASSING HOUR

AN ILLUSTRATED CHRONICLE OF THE WORLD'S DOINGS

A Millionaire Policeman.

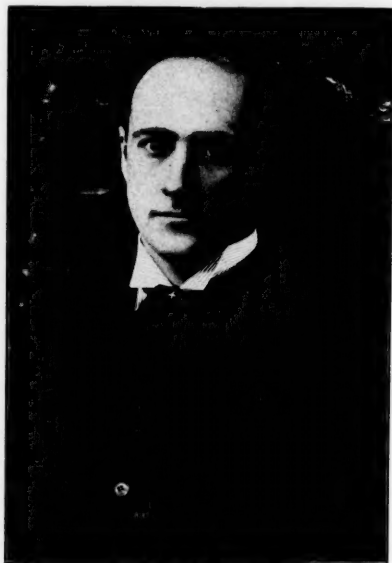
If all the stories told are true, it is not an unusual thing for a member of the New York police force to acquire a considerable fortune during his term of service as a policeman. It is an unusual thing, however, for a millionaire to apply for a position as a member of the force. This is what Dave Hennen Morris did. He is a millionaire, with a little to spare besides. He is interested in the automobile industry, and was at one time president of the Automobile Club of America. Morris was sworn in as a patrolman a short time ago. He doesn't want the salary, and he doesn't pine for a blue coat and brass buttons, or a big locust nightstick. He does want to discourage automobile "scorchers," and he wants to be a policeman so that he can arrest them when he

catches them. He runs a machine that is fast enough to overhaul most of the cars that he meets.

Two other rich men, Colgate Hoyt and Winthrop E. Scarritt, have joined the police force for the same reason. Neither of them is quite so zealous as Morris. Morris was arrested himself a short time ago while in the act of

chasing another scorch-er. He was released, however, when he explained that he was only breaking the law in order to catch another law-breaker, who was somewhere down the road in front of him hitting the high places at the rate of forty odd miles an hour.

The average pedestrian may object just as much to be run over by Special Policeman Morris as by an ordinary speed maniac who doesn't wear a badge. It is a felony to assault a regular police



DAVE HENHEN MORRIS,
A millionaire policeman.



DR. ALLAN McLANE HAMILTON,
Who believes that "genius is akin to madness."

officer. It is not a felony to assault Morris or Colgate or Scarritt, who are only "specials."

The Twilight of the Mind.

Doctor Allan McLane Hamilton is almost as well known in the criminal courts as he is in the medical fraternity. For a good many years he has been foremost among the alienists of this country. His whole life-work has been practically devoted to the study of those of abnormal mentality. In almost every criminal trial where insanity is the plea of the defense, Doctor Hamilton is among the witnesses called. He has a wider knowledge of the law and of court procedure than a great many practising lawyers, and is perfectly at his ease and master of the situation under the severest kind of cross-examination. In spite of the fact that a good many people believe our criminal lawyers rely too much on the insanity plea, Doctor Hamilton and others of his class are doing a great deal of good in broadening the scientific knowledge of mental derange-



MISS CLARA CLEMENS,
"Mark Twain's" daughter, who appeared on the concert stage last winter.

ments. Doctor Hamilton believes in the theory that a good many prominent men have belonged to a class of people larger than is imagined, and occupying a middle ground between sanity and insanity. Napoleon, Balzac, and Maxim Gorky are mentioned as belonging to this class.

Mark Twain's Daughter.

Miss Clara Clemens, the daughter of Mark Twain, is a very attractive young lady, who is making a distinct hit as a singer on the concert stage. She has never yet appeared in opera. In England, "Tom Jones," by Fielding, has been thrown into the form of a comic opera, and is doing fairly well. If some musical genius would make a really American opera out of "Huckleberry Finn," a great many people would flock to hear Mark Twain's daughter sing in it.

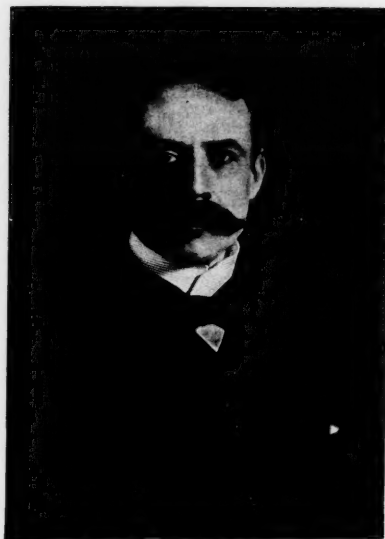
An English Musical Genius.

We are not prone to credit Anglo-Saxon races with high creative power

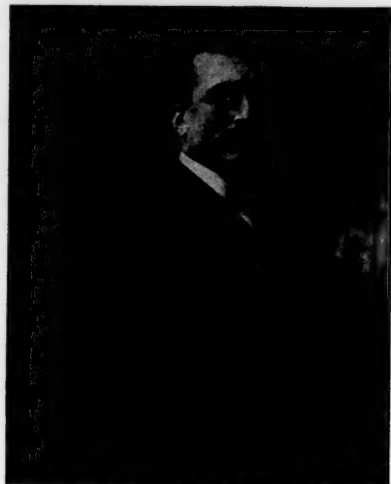
in the realm of music, but the fact remains that a fair proportion of the better class of modern music is the work of English-speaking people. Aside from Mascagni and Richard Strauss, Sir Edward Elgar, who paid a visit to this country last season, and is likely to return here during the coming winter, is the biggest creative force in the musical world to-day. His oratorios and cantatas, "The Dream of Gerontius," "The Apostles," "King Olaf," and "The Banner of St. George," are the work of a man who has inherited something of the solidity and spirit of Handel, and who has profited as well by the teachings of Wagner and those who followed him. As a conductor, interpreting his own compositions, he is something of a disappointment. He is a tall, dry, scholarly-looking man; too conventional in type to fill the place of the ideal conductor.

Sven Hedin's Latest Exploit.

Definite news has been received that Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer, has accomplished successfully the difficult



SIR EDWARD ELGAR,
England's foremost composer.



SVEN HEDIN,
Now returning from a trip to Tibet.

journey he undertook over a year ago. Starting from Chinese Turkestan, he has made the trip to the sacred city of Shigatse, one hundred and thirty miles beyond Lhasa. He traveled for eighty-four days in a solitude like that of an arctic winter through mountain ranges absolutely uninhabited.

There are very few unexplored places left on the map of the world. Hedin has wiped one of them off. During the trip his entire caravan of camels and horses was lost, but not a single man perished. He describes the journey as the most wonderful that he has ever taken in his twenty-two years of experience as an explorer.

For ages Tibet has been a land of mystery. A year or so ago an expedition of English soldiers, under the command of Colonel Younghusband, reached Lhasa. No European has ever, in the whole course of history, passed through the country that Hedin has just crossed. There is no doubt that the mountain ranges of Tibet have valuable mineral deposits, and that there are fortunes yet to be made there by adventurous spirits. Hedin has opened the gate a little.

GERTRUDE ELLIOT'S CRUCIBLE

BY
**MRS.
GEORGIE
SHELDON**



ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

Gertrude Elliot learns from a confession made by her guardian, Mr. Daniel Dexter, that the funds left by her father have been employed in disastrous speculations and that every dollar has been swallowed up. Mr. Dexter confesses himself a thief, but pleads that his own business had been in a bad way and that he had borrowed the money in good faith, hoping to be able to repay it; part of it, he explains, went to meet the debts contracted by his son Robert. Gertrude had been fond of Robert, and for the sake of the son she forgives the father. Later Mr. Dexter tells Robert of Gertrude's goodness, and the boy, who has been rather wild, resolves to turn over a new leaf. He tears himself away from old associations and goes to California. Gertrude visits an old nurse, Phronie Fisher, and while there gives aid to a young man who is hurt in an automobile accident. Later she learns that the man is Hugh Spencer and that he knew Robert Dexter at Yale. He is anxious to learn where Robert is gone, but something ominous in his eyes makes Gertrude give an evasive reply to his inquiries. Accepting an engagement as housekeeper for Mrs. Young of Kalmia Heights, she is disconcerted to find Hugh Spencer there and to hear that he is Mrs. Young's son, she being a widow when she married Mr. Young. Hugh Spencer shows the fascinating young housekeeper marked attention, much to Gertrude's embarrassment; and it is with much relief that she sees the family depart for their annual stay at Newport.

CHAPTER X.

AN hour after the departure of the family, Gertrude went to town and engaged her workmen for repairs. On her return she set her full force vigorously at work in various portions of the house, and at the end of two busy weeks she had her establishment in perfect order.

"I've never seen the likes of yez," the cook told her when it was all over. "Ye're a hustler worth havin', and yez can make everybody else hustle, too. I've never seen the house so swate and clean, from top to bottom, in all the years I've been here."

"Well, Nora, you surely have done your full share to make it so, and it does seem very nice, I admit," Gertrude had told her.

She now felt that she could rest somewhat. She kept everything going

systematically, but, as the work was comparatively light, she gave all the servants an extra half-holiday now and then, which they greatly appreciated. In the midst of her labors she received a letter from Mr. Dexter. She had written him as soon as she was settled in her position, telling him where she was and what she was doing.

I was surprised to learn that you are located with Mrs. Young in the capacity of housekeeper (he wrote). It hurts me to have you in such a position, although I know you are abundantly qualified to fill it. I am disappointed also, my dear, that you would not come to me; but I admire both your courage and independence. And now you, in turn, will perhaps be surprised when I tell you that Alfred Young and I were once very close friends, and the last time I saw him was when I redeemed that check which came so near wrecking our family honor. I did not tell you the name of the man whom Rob defrauded, when we had our talk, but I am impelled to do so now and to ask if, during your duties, you should have access

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to any papers, you will keep an eye out for that note and check. It is more than a year since they so mysteriously disappeared, and it seems almost absurd to cherish any hope of finding them. Still the thought came to me, and I felt it could do no harm to suggest it to you. Fearing you may have forgotten dates and figures, I give them here. The check was drawn on the Northminster Bank; the number was 1026, the date was September, 4, 189—, and the amount was five thousand four hundred dollars. I gave the note October 10, and redeemed it the 19th of December following. Pardon me for troubling you again with this.

Faithfully yours,
DANIEL DEXTER.

P. S. A long letter just received from Rob tells me he is doing well, likes the fruit business, and is planning great things for the future. He enclosed his first installment toward wiping out the old score, one hundred and fifty dollars. I have deposited it in the Northminster to your account, and my old heart is filled with joy at this evidence of a great change for the better in him.

D. D.

Gertrude looked very grave as she finished reading this epistle.

"How strange that I should have been led to this family!" she mused. "Can it be possible that the note and check were lost here before Mr. Dexter left the house—that they slipped from his grasp when he thought he was putting them into his wallet, and were picked up later by some one and mixed with other papers? Of course I have nothing to do with any of the private accounts of the family, so, even if they are in the house, I would never be likely to find them; ah!"—with a start—"Mrs. Young asked me if I would assist her with some unbalanced accounts. Possibly that might give me an opportunity to search for those missing slips—yet the outlook does not seem very hopeful, because their loss occurred so long ago. I certainly rejoice with Mr. Dexter that Robert seems to have come to a sense of what is his duty, and is doing so well—but somehow I'm afraid I am not so glad on my own account as I—I ought to be."

Opening a drawer in her desk, she took from it a small box. Lifting the cover, she drew forth a pretty locket attached to a fine gold chain. Touching a spring, the enameled case flew open, and revealed the frank, handsome

face of a young man of possibly twenty years. It had evidently been cut from a photograph to fit the locket.

"Oh, Rob, you were all right in those old school days, and I *was* very fond of you," the girl resumed, with a regretful sigh. "We might have continued to be good friends if you had not got in with that fast set at Yale and made me afraid of you. I know I hurt you last winter when you came to tell me how you had always cared for me; but I couldn't trust you, and I had to tell you why. But I hurt myself worse, and I have carried a very sore heart ever since; so I think it is very strange I do not feel more elated over what Mr. Dexter has written me to-day."

She sat gravely studying the likeness for several moments, then closed the locket, and was about to return it to the box, when she noticed that the diamond which had been set in the center of the enameled cover was missing. She presently found it, however, among the cotton in the box, and wrapped it carefully in tissue-paper.

"I must take this to the jeweler's and have it reset the next time I go to town," she said; and, replacing the lid, she dropped the box into the chate-laine-bag which she wore at her waist.

Now that her busy time was over, Gertrude wrote for "Phronie" to come and make her a little visit; and the good woman, accepting the invitation with alacrity, spent a couple of delightful days—all the time she could spare—at Kalmia Heights, and was very proud to see how competent her whilom pupil had proved herself in her responsible position, although she affirmed with a yearning sigh that Gertrude should be the mistress rather than the paid house-keeper of such an establishment.

On the day of Mrs. Fisher's return to Long Island, Gertrude found herself really homesick for the first time since coming to Mrs. Young. It suddenly dawned upon her, with an unwonted sense of sadness, how utterly alone she was, and how isolated from the social world she had become.

It was only a couple of hours since the departure of her guest, and she was

sitting upon a side veranda which adjoined the library. The place was a kind of out-of-door parlor, sheltered from the sun and rain by a great awning. A large rug was spread upon the floor, a table for books and work stood in one corner, and invitingly disposed around it were a wicker settee and several comfortable rockers.

Gertrude at first tried to busy herself with some needlework, but, finding her thoughts depressing, she at length took up a book that had just come from the publishers. This also failed to interest her, and she soon laid it aside. The next she knew hot tears were raining over her cheeks and dropping upon the folded hands lying idly on her lap.

She started guiltily, and sat suddenly erect as she realized her weakness.

"What am I doing?" she cried, as she impatiently brushed the glittering drops aside. "What useless—what ungrateful repining, when I should be buoyant and happy in view of what I have achieved!"

She sprang to her feet, saying to herself she would get her hat and go for a walk, when as she rounded the corner of the house she was startled to find herself confronted by Hugh Spencer.

"Mr. Spencer!" she exclaimed, flushing scarlet; but her tone of unmistakable dismay seemed a doubtful welcome to the unexpected guest.

"Yes, it is I, Miss Elliot; but I fear you are not very glad to see me," returned the young man, with a laugh of constraint as his eager eyes swept her astonished face.

"I certainly was not looking for you, but I shall be happy to make you as comfortable as possible while you remain," Gertrude graciously responded, and quickly recovering her self-poise.

"Thank you; I had business in New York, and thought I would take a run up home to see if everything is going all right here," he explained.

"We are getting on famously, only I am afraid we are not having enough to do," she smilingly observed, as she recalled her recent depression. "I trust

Mrs. Young and the young ladies are well and enjoying themselves."

"Isabelle and Josie are having the time of their lives, but I'm inclined to think my mother would prefer to be at home; I'm sure I would," Mr. Spencer affirmed, with unmistakable emphasis. "It is too warm weather to live in a fashionable straight-jacket—otherwise known as society togs—and dance attendance at all kinds of so-called swell functions."

Gertrude smiled. She had just been yearning after those very flesh-pots of Egypt, and bemoaning her ostracism from social life and swell functions.

Mr. Spencer appropriated a rocker as he concluded. "Don't go, Miss Elliot," he pleaded, as she turned to gather up her work and book. "I don't want to drive you from this cozy-corner and delicious breeze."

"Thank you, Mr. Spencer, but I have something inside to attend to—" she began, when he interposed imperatively.

"If it is to order dinner for me I won't have it. I am sure there is enough in the house to satisfy any ordinary mortal, and I will share whatever you are to have for your own dinner; so please sit down and talk to me for—truly, I have been downright homesick during the last two weeks. Are you having any trouble nowadays with that consequential butler?" he concluded, with an amused laugh, as he recalled the passage at arms that he had witnessed on a previous return.

Gertrude's face also dimpled at the remembrance. "Oh, no; Joyce seems quite complaisant and is faithful about his duties; all the same, I am sure he regards me with anything but friendly feelings," she replied.

"How so? Do please sit down, Miss Elliot; you make me feel like a trespasser." And he rose to place a chair for her. "I hope he doesn't presume to be disrespectful."

Almost unconsciously Gertrude sank into the proffered seat. "No; he knows the power that is vested in me, and he is, at times, almost too obsequious; but I am inclined to think he would be glad to have my reign here terminated."



She was startled to find herself confronted by Hugh Spencer.

"That would be an irreparable loss," said Hugh Spencer, in a low, earnest tone as his glance lingered upon the graceful form near him. How perfect its proportions, he thought; how becoming her gown of sheer white lawn, with its embroidered waist, the elbow-sleeves, finished with a fall of delicate lace, revealing a round, shapely arm, tapering down to a dainty wrist and a slim, white hand. And her face! What constituted its peculiar attraction? He had seen many a face more classically beautiful, but never one that had so satisfied him in every way.

Gertrude lifted a quick, startled look to him at this last remark, and, fearing he had said too much, he added:

"I am sure my mother would feel it such." Then he changed the subject, and they dropped into a pleasant chat that lasted for nearly an hour, when, as the library clock struck four, Gertrude excused herself and went in to give orders for the entertainment of her unexpected guest.

She could but acknowledge that Mr. Spencer was a cultivated and entertaining gentleman. From the first she had realized that he possessed a mind above the ordinary. To-day he had shown her the best there was in him, and, strangely enough, she found herself entirely free from all sense of depression as she returned to her duties in the house.

She held a consultation with the cook, and a tempting dinner was arranged for him, after partaking of which he called for his horse, and went for a canter into the country.

The next day he made no reference to going back to Newport, but lingered about the house and veranda, and managed to secure several interviews with Gertrude, who began to feel decidedly uncomfortable, and to wonder when he intended to rejoin the family.

On this second evening, after dinner, she shut herself into the housekeeper's sitting-room and busied herself writing letters, although it was so warm she longed to be out of doors. But in the midst of her work Letty came to her saying Mr. Spencer would like to see her for a few moments on the veranda.

Devoutly hoping he wished to inform her of his intended departure on the morrow, Gertrude at once obeyed the summons, and found the gentleman just finishing his postprandial cigar, which he immediately threw away at her approach, and, springing to his feet, drew forward a rocker for her.

"How can you shut yourself up in the house this glorious evening, Miss Elliot?" he questioned. "I was feeling lonely, and ventured to ask you to come out and help me kill time. See what a gorgeous afterglow we are having."

"It is wonderful!" she said, in a low, intense tone; but he thought that the radiance that suddenly shone in her face and leaped into her great brown eyes was even more wonderful than the sky.

For the moment she was lost to everything but the glorious scene before her, and was saying to herself: "It is like 'the city that had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it.'"

"The view from this veranda is one I never tire of," Mr. Spencer at length observed, to break the silence.

"The views from every point are lovely here at Kalmia Heights," Gertrude returned, her eyes still on the sky.

"Do you think so?—and you are happy here?" queried her companion, in an eager voice, and searching her face with yearning eyes.

"Yes, I am happy," she replied, but he knew from her tone and that far-away look that her interpretation of the word was entirely different from his own—that her happiness and the sweet serenity which she always maintained were not dependent upon her surroundings, but proceeded from some source above and beyond his comprehension. He realized, too, that her standard of life was more lofty; that everything she did was governed by a purity of motive and a love of right living that took little thought for self, and, when he was with her, something within him reached out longingly toward the heights she was seeking.

"Sit down, please," he pleaded, for she was still standing.

"I have some letters to write——"

she began doubtfully, but she flushed as she met the look in his eyes.

"Oh, the letters can wait," he retorted lightly, "and a beautiful full moon will soon be rising out yonder."

A sweet, rippling laugh broke from Gertrude as, yielding to his tempting invitation and her own yearning to be out of doors, she accepted the rocker and thanked him for the hassock which he placed at her feet.

"I think you must have a strong element of persistency in your nature, Mr. Spencer," she observed, with a roguish glance. "Do you always manage to gain your point?"

"To concede that would be to confess to unmitigated selfishness, and, Miss Elliot, I wish your good opinion," he said, with mock gravity.

Again the girl flushed and laughed. "Thank you," she said. "But persistency is not a bad quality when rightly employed."

"Granted; but I know you would say that a dogged determination to have one's own way in everything is a bad quality; eh?" And he turned an inquiring look upon her.

"Y-es, unless one could be sure that one's own way was the right way, and could work no wrong to another," she thoughtfully replied.

"That is just what I would have expected from you with your high standard. I wish I could match it," said Hugh Spencer, in a tone that told he meant it.

"There is but one standard—really; the standard of good. Nothing else is worth while," Gertrude gently returned.

"But you can have degrees of good."

"Not as a standard, or principle, to live by," Gertrude interposed; "any more than you can have degrees of truth."

"Yes, truth is absolute. I see your point, Miss Elliot; but how can poor, faulty humanity ever attain to such a standard?"

"By constant striving."

"Whew! that means a continuous battle with Apollyon for every one of us."

Gertrude nodded, a slight smile playing around her lips.

"And you say nothing else is worth while?"

"Yes, because if one is not advancing one is retrograding," the girl gravely replied.

Hugh Spencer flushed and moved uneasily in his chair. Presently he observed:

"See how the sky is changing! Do you ever see pictures in the clouds, Miss Elliot?"

"Sometimes."

"What do you make of those out yonder?"

Gertrude's face grew luminous as her eyes swept the gorgeous horizon.

"When I first came out I seemed to see the Holy City, as described in Revelation, garnished with all manner of precious stones; but the tints are not as brilliant now. I think I never saw quite so beautiful a sunset before," she said, with a soft sigh.

"And I can see what looks to me like a portion of Lake Geneva," said her companion. "See that patch of wonderful blue on the right, and those lofty summits tipped with gold behind it, while just at their base on the left there is a castle, its towers and turrets outlined with silver—the Castle of Chillon I can almost imagine it to be; can you make it out?"

"In a way, perhaps; but I have only a vague idea of the place, gleaned from descriptions and photographs, and from Byron's 'Prisoner of Chillon.' Were you ever there, Mr. Spencer?" Gertrude eagerly inquired.

"Yes; the castle is delightfully picturesque viewed from without; but within gruesome enough to satisfy the most tragically inclined. Poor Bonnard! to have languished with those he loved in such bitter bondage in the midst of such entrancing beauty. Have you never been abroad, Miss Elliot?"

"No; my father promised me a year in Europe—we were to go when I was through school. But my mother was never able to travel, and then he—died," Gertrude explained.

"Would you like to go? Have you a desire to visit other countries?" the

young man asked, an eager thrill in his tones.

What a companion she would make!—so gracious, so sincere, and invariably sweet-tempered. Then, too, she always saw the best in everything, and gathered inspiration and practical lessons from the commonest as well as the most refined things in life. He knew that she would satisfy him in every way. She had impressed him as a "glorious girl" when he had first seen her in the home of Luke Fisher, and every interview since had deepened his interest in her, his reverence for her, until he had made up his mind that he would win her if it were possible.

"Indeed I have," Gertrude said, in reply to his question. "To travel in foreign lands has been one of my fondest dreams for years."

Hugh Spencer's face flushed. Some strong, inward emotion stirred him and held him silent for a moment. Then suddenly leaning toward his companion, he said in tones that were tremulous from mingled hope and fear:

"I expect to sail some time next month for my third tour abroad. Miss Elliot, I love you. Will you marry me and go with me as my wife?"

CHAPTER XI.

Gertrude started suddenly erect in her chair, a look of blank dismay sweeping over her face at this unlooked-for proposal, and the man beside her began to fear that he had blundered, that he had been fatally premature in his declaration.

"Forgive me if I have shocked you by my abruptness," he hurriedly resumed, "but I came from Newport expressly to say this to you. I began to be deeply interested in you, Miss Elliot, when I first met you in Luke Fisher's hospitable home, and I fully intended seeking you there again, when, strangely enough, I found you here, on my return, a member of our household. I gave up my yachting trip for the sake of remaining here with you. You have driven me nearly to despair by your

systematic avoidance of me, and now, after two weeks of absence—two weeks of unendurable suspense—I have come home to put my fate to the test."

He paused a moment, glanced anxiously at his companion, then continued: "I have been a man of the world ever since I left college. I have been attracted to many women in society, and once or twice I have thought I was in love, and was half-tempted to marry; but never, until the day I found you kneeling upon the ground beside me have I looked into a face or heard a voice that had such power to move and hold me. Something then suddenly awoke in me, in response to the clear, pure light in your eyes, and the sweet, quiet restfulness of your manner—a yearning that made me utterly dissatisfied with myself and my aimless life. And as I have come to know you better, that longing has taken a stronger hold upon me. I am not a particularly good man, yet I have my ideals, and, I hope, many worthy aspirations. I have one very ugly trait, however. I am unforgiving and revengeful upon occasion. It's said to be a taint in the Spencer blood. You see how I am opening my heart to you," he broke off deprecatingly, "but with you to admonish, help, and—love me, I believe I could eventually attain to even your high moral standard. Miss Elliot—Gertrude, *will* you marry me?"

That the man was in dead earnest could not be questioned. There was a dignity, a sincerity in his tone, that made him seem very manly and pleasing, and which, in spite of her agitation and dismay in view of his startling declaration, attracted Gertrude to him more strongly than ever before. For the moment, however, she was tongue-tied, absolutely incapable of speech, and he, unable to bear the suspense of her silence, leaned forward and laid his hand lightly upon hers as it rested on the arm of the chair.

"Will you, Gertrude? My heart is hungry for you. Will you go with me next month?" he pleaded.

She gently released her hand.

"Oh, Mr. Spencer, I did not dream

of anything like this," she said regretfully. "I am very sorry if you have allowed yourself to be encouraged by anything that I may unconsciously have said or done; but I—I do not love you, and I cannot marry you."

The man grew very white.

"Are you sure?" he inquired under his breath.

"Yes; very sure."

"If I will be patient—if I will wait, can you not learn to love me?"

"No, no."

"Is it because you fear what my mother or sisters might say?"

"Oh, no; although they would naturally object to such an arrangement."

"And do you think for a moment that I could be influenced by their objections?" questioned Hugh Spencer earnestly. "It is true that reverses have deprived you of the social position you once occupied; but what of that? It has not a feather's weight with me. It is yourself I want. I have money enough, and do not need to seek wealth. I love you—love *you*, Gertrude. I believe I could make you happy, and I know you could help me to be a better man."

His voice, his words, intense and full of entreaty, moved her deeply; she felt a strange desire to weep, and she could only murmur brokenly:

"Please—please say no more, Mr. Spencer—it cannot be."

He straightened himself suddenly, his lips set in a rigid, white line.

"Is—*is* there some one else?" he inquired, in tones that were tremulously intense. "Nothing save your acknowledgment that you love another will ever convince me that I cannot win you."

Gertrude's heart gave a startled bound, and a vivid scarlet swept to her brow. The pointblank question caused her to turn a search-light within herself. Did she love another? She had once thought that she loved Robert Dexter. Whether she still loved him well enough to ever become his wife she could not at this moment say. Her faith in him had been greatly weakened, her affection terribly shocked, both by what she

herself had known of his life and by what Mr. Dexter had felt obliged to tell her. To be sure, like the prodigal of old, he had seemed to come to himself, and there had been a radical change in him; but whether this would be sufficient to eventually restore the old-time fondness or trust she could not tell—at least, she would have to see him again first.

But she could not lay bare her heart to Hugh Spencer, confessing to all this. It was her problem alone, and she had a right to solve it in her own way.

"Is there some one else?" the man repeated, with a sharp insistence which brought a flash of spirit into the girl's splendid brown eyes.

She rose and met his glance squarely.

"That is a question, Mr. Spencer, which neither you nor any other person has the right to ask me," she said, with a dignity which only increased his respect for her. "I am not unmindful," she added, in a softened tone, "of the honor you have done me in asking me to be your wife, and I would not wilfully cause you pain by any seeming slight of your regard for me. I deeply regret this unfortunate occurrence, and can only hope that you may soon forget it."

She turned quickly from him, and was gone before he could detain her.

A bitter rage took possession of the disappointed suitor as she disappeared, for he could not bear to be balked in anything upon which he had set his heart. He sat absolutely motionless for a full minute after Gertrude left him, his hands clenched upon the arms of his chair, his teeth locked, every muscle in his athletic body rigid. Then he sprang to his feet, dashed down the steps of the veranda, and strode rapidly away to walk off his choler, muttering as he went:

"I know him—you don't need to tell me his name, my Gertrude; but Robert Dexter shall never win you. If he is the man, I have it in my power to besmirch his character so that neither you nor any other woman will ever care to marry him."

Gertrude did not see Hugh Spencer

again until the next morning, when he came upon her as she stood on the steps leading to a side entrance to the house, waiting for the man to take her to market.

He had himself well in hand now, and greeted her as if nothing unusual had occurred, chatting socially until the

eral other articles, to facilitate her search for the missing list.

"No, I must have left it on my desk," she observed, and turned to go back for it.

She started to run up the steps, but stumbled, and the box with the other things flew out of her hands, and she



Five minutes later he was galloping off into the country.

trap appeared, and then accompanied her down the steps.

As they reached the lower walk Gertrude paused.

"I wonder if I have my memorandum," she said, opening the chatelaine-bag that hung from her belt.

She removed a small box, with sev-

herself would have fallen had not Mr. Spencer caught her in his arms.

"How awkward of me!" exclaimed Gertrude, flushing, as she released herself from his supporting arm. Then, to cover her embarrassment, she ran swiftly up the steps, heedless of the things she had dropped.

Hugh Spencer gathered up a handkerchief, a pencil, and a little coin-purse; then his eye caught sight of a small gold locket a few paces away. It had fallen to the ground as the box dropped from Gertrude's hand, and, striking upon the spring, was forced open, and now lay face downward upon the ground.

As he lifted it, the man found himself gazing straight into the face of his old-time foe, Robert Dexter, and an angry imprecation leaped from his lips.

"I knew it," he said to himself, his lips whitening suddenly; but Gertrude reappeared at that instant, and he handed the locket to her open, as he had found it, caustically observing: "I hope it hasn't been injured by its fall."

Gertrude's cheeks were very red as she closed the locket with a snap and restored it to the box; but she thanked him politely, then, turning away, quietly remarked:

"Now, Jerry, I believe I am ready at last."

Mr. Spencer assisted her into the trap, then stood back, hat in hand, and gravely watched her drive away.

Five minutes later he was galloping off into the country, and was seen no more that day until dinner-time, when he was served in solitary state by Joyce. After his lonely meal he had his usual smoke on the veranda, where he fell into a painful and protracted reverie; but finally, throwing the end of his burned-out cigar away, he started off to the library, where he rang for a maid.

Letty answered his call.

"Please find Miss Elliot, Letty," he directed, "and say to her that, as I shall leave to-morrow morning, I would like to see her for a few moments this evening."

A little later Gertrude appeared, and the young man, with his habitual politeness, sprang to place a chair for her.

"Thank you, but I will not stop to sit down," Gertrude observed. "Letty tells me you are going in the morning. Have you some instructions to leave with me?"

"No, but I have something I wish to

say to you. Pray be seated, Miss Elliot." He turned and closed the door through which she had entered.

Gertrude was conscious of quickened heart-throbs at this act, but she quietly laid one hand upon the back of the proffered chair, and remained standing while she regarded him with a grave look of inquiry.

"After what occurred this morning," her companion resumed, "I am, of course, no longer in doubt regarding the question I asked you last evening. Robert Dexter is the same one else. But, Miss Elliot, allow me to ask whether you know the character of the man upon whom you have bestowed your affections."

Gertrude's slender fingers closed convulsively over the back of the chair, but she betrayed no other sign of emotion except almost unconsciously to draw herself more erect as she coldly remarked:

"Mr. Spencer, I decline to pursue this conversation. Unless you have something to say to me in connection with my duties here, I will ask you to excuse me."

She made a move as if to leave the room, but he stepped between her and the door.

"No, I cannot let you go quite yet," he said, with a ring of passionate appeal in his tones. "Last night I placed my hand and all I possess at your disposal. I love you. I can give you everything desirable in life that money can purchase. I would lavish my wealth upon you. I would spend my life in one long effort to make you happy. But I cannot tolerate the prospect that you are to become the wife of Robert Dexter, for he is utterly unworthy of you."

"I protest——" Gertrude began, a flush of indignation mantling her cheeks.

"I know I am presumptuous," he interrupted, "but surely, Miss Elliot, you cannot be aware that the man whose likeness you treasure so sacredly is a forger and a thief!"

Gertrude's heart leaped into her throat at these words. Until that mo-

ment she had not dreamed that any one living, save Mr. Dexter, Robert, and herself, had even a suspicion of that disastrous episode in the young man's life.

But, putting a strong curb upon herself to conceal her dismay, she gravely demanded:

"What do you mean, Mr. Spencer?"

He searched her face with surprised eyes. If she loved Robert Dexter, how could she receive the statement he had made with such equanimity?

"Exactly what I have said, Miss Elliot," he replied.

"You are liable to be called upon to prove it," she retorted, with a violently beating heart, but assuming a bold front, for she was anxious to learn how much he really knew.

"I can prove it," he said, with such positive intonation that she almost lost her self-possession.

"Well?" she questioned. There was a note of incredulity in her voice.

"You do not believe it?" he said, flushing with sudden anger. "Listen! Alfred Young, who was my stepfather, was the man whom Robert Dexter robbed by raising a check from four hundred to fifty-four hundred dollars."

"That is only another bald statement, Mr. Spencer; but you have proved nothing," Gertrude parried.

His eyes flashed ominously. He would give her proof if she desired it.

"Miss Elliot, I have that forged check in my possession at this moment," he flashed back at her hotly.

"Impossible!" she cried, and yet intuitively she seemed to know that it was true. She gripped the back of the chair hard to keep herself from reeling beneath this unlooked-for blow.

"Still incredulous?" queried her companion, with a grim smile. "Allow me to give you tangible proof of what I have stated."

From his pocket he drew out a slip of paper, and he held it up before her.

She knew it was a check; but her sight was so blurred from the shock of this unexpected dénouement she could not distinguish a word or a figure on it.

"This was a daring piece of busi-

ness for the young man to attempt," Mr. Spencer went on. "It is strange he didn't realize that it was a mere matter of time when he would have to face detection. But Dexter had been going to the bad ever since leaving college, and perhaps he got desperate. Possibly he may have hoped that, since his father and Mr. Young were on very friendly terms, the matter would be hushed up, and he could escape the consequences. However, all that is neither here nor there; the fact remains that I hold in my hand at this moment the damning evidence of Robert Dexter's crime."

While he was speaking Gertrude had recovered somewhat from the shock she had received, and had been doing some rapid thinking. Perhaps this was her opportunity to solve the mystery which had so distressed and perplexed Mr. Dexter. It was something to have learned that the forged check was still in existence, and to have located it. But when and by what means had Hugh Spencer become possessed of that ruinous slip of paper? And where was Mr. Dexter's note, which Mr. Young had accepted as a voucher for the amount, until the former could conveniently pay the money, and which her friend had told her was pinned to the check when it was surrendered to him?

She gazed thoughtfully at the slip in his hands for a moment; then calmly meeting his glance she inquired:

"When was this crime committed, Mr. Spencer?"

"During the last year of Mr. Young's life."

"Then why did he not immediately arraign the offender?"

"Ah—well—ahem!—his health was failing, and he was ordered abroad rather suddenly."

Mr. Spencer was evidently somewhat embarrassed by her question, and Gertrude was quick to perceive and take advantage of it.

"Did that check come into your possession before Mr. Young went abroad?" she pursued.

"It was here in the house at the time he went abroad."

"Did Mr. Young know that you had it? Did he give it to you with instructions to bring action against Robert Dexter in case he did not return? If so, you should have your power-of-attorney in writing."

The man was growing restive under her pertinent inquiries.

"Really—Miss Elliot——" he began, with some hesitation.

She shrugged her shoulders slightly. "If he did not, how do you know—how do you dare say that Robert Dexter committed such a crime?" she demanded. "How are you going to prove it? I am a novice regarding law, Mr. Spencer, but common sense and reason tell me that you have a very weak case if you expect to ruin a man's reputation by simply producing a check, which, to all appearance, is like any other check, and claiming that it has been criminally tampered with. Moreover, if this matter was left in your hands to be settled according to law, why have you waited so long? Why have you not done your duty before?"

"I have been biding my time."

"Biding your time! To what end, if I may ask?" Gertrude queried, in unfeigned surprise.

"Awaiting a convenient opportunity to get even with an enemy," tersely returned Hugh Spencer.

"An enemy!" repeated the girl, looking mystified.

"Yes. I have hated Robert Dexter for years." The words came sullenly from his lips.

Gertrude experienced an inward shock of keen pain. Until this hour Hugh Spencer had always appeared such a gentleman and superior to anything of a base or petty nature, it was difficult to believe he could nurse for years so ignoble a passion as hatred, notwithstanding what he had told her regarding his one very ugly trait; and, somehow, the knowledge hurt her cruelly.

She had no words, but the look of pain in her eyes sent a sudden chill to the man's heart as he realized how he had lowered himself in her estimation.

"I told you I inherited the Spencer taint," he said, half-apologetically, half-defiantly. "I do not forgive wilful injuries. I am never satisfied until they are avenged."

"What an unfortunate taint!" said Gertrude gently. "But, tell me, why do you hate Robert Dexter?"

The man shot a quick, surprised look at her. He had supposed she knew of their enmity and its cause.

"We—we had a falling out in college. He struck me a cowardly blow. He made me the butt of my class. He——"

Light suddenly dawned upon Gertrude. She believed she knew now how Hugh Spencer had gained possession of that forged check, and the motive that had actuated him. He had overheard the conversation between Mr. Dexter and Mr. Young on that memorable night, and had stolen the check from the overcoat of the former while the two men were in the drawing-room.

"Oh!" she said, in a voice of cold scorn. "So *you* were his opponent in that interclass meet race! I heard of that affair from an eye-witness, but never knew until this moment the name of the man who 'spiked' Robert Dexter! You remind me, Mr. Spencer, of what Tacitus says—'It is human nature to hate those whom we have injured.'"

CHAPTER XII.

A burning wave of mingled shame and anger swept over Hugh Spencer's face as he realized how he had betrayed himself. He would have given a great deal if he could have recalled the words he had just spoken.

"I suppose it is natural that you should stand up for Dexter," he said gloomily; "but I intend to get even with him, all the same."

"And you have been saving the check all this time for that purpose," Gertrude observed dryly. Then she asked, as a sudden thought came to her: "Will you allow me to examine that slip of paper, Mr. Spencer?"

He lifted his brows at her request.

"You feel it would not be safe to allow it to go out of your possession?" said Gertrude, with a smile as she read his thoughts. "Very well, perhaps you will then oblige me by holding it up—blank side toward me—between me and the light."

"Why, certainly," he replied, regarding her with a quizzical smile. He stepped close to the lamp on the table, and held up the check.

She moved nearer to him, and examined the slip with keen scrutiny.

"I see—thank you, Mr. Spencer," she said. "And now—will you tell me where is the note that was pinned to that check when you found it?"

The man grew suddenly white, and gazed at her in amazement.

"The note?" he faltered.

"Yes, the note which Daniel Dexter gave, and Mr. Young accepted, to redeem the check you hold in your hand at this moment," she quietly returned.

Hugh Spencer could only continue to gaze stupidly at her.

"You will observe there are some pinholes on one end of the check," Gertrude resumed. "Well, the note of which I speak was pinned to it when you found it; and the fact that Mr. Young accepted that note proves that the matter had been quietly settled, and he had no intention of allowing it ever to be made public."

"Really, Miss Elliot, you appear, after all, to know a good deal about this unfortunate affair!"

"Yes, and I also know that the note I mentioned was canceled, *in cash*, on the Wednesday evening previous to the



The man grew suddenly white, and gazed at her in amazement.

sailing of Mr. Young on Saturday. Moreover, I can give you the date and number of the check, as well as the date of the note—"

"The deuce you can!" burst in a startled tone from Hugh Spencer. "Ah, yes—of course," he added, with the next breath. "Rob Dexter must have told you that fairy-tale."

"Robert Dexter and I have never exchanged a word upon the subject," Gertrude gravely affirmed; "but the number of the check is 1026; the date is September 1. The note is dated October 10, and it was redeemed the 19th of December following, when both check and note were surrendered by Mr. Young to Mr. Daniel Dexter."

"This doesn't look like it," mockingly retorted the gentleman, as he struck the slip with his right hand.

"Nevertheless, what I have told you is true, Mr. Spencer, and—you *must* know it," was the undaunted reply.

"Then how do you account for the fact that I have this damning evidence in my possession?" he sharply demanded. His face was set and stern. He breathed heavily.

"There is but one solution to the mystery that suggests itself to me," said Gertrude, looking him steadily in the eye.

"And that is——?" The man's lips were colorless and his voice was scarcely audible as he put the question.

"That the last interview between Mr. Dexter and Mr. Young was overheard, and those important papers were stolen from a pocket of Mr. Dexter's overcoat, which he left lying over a chair, in this very room, while the two gentlemen were looking at a new picture in the drawing-room," tersely explained the dauntless girl.

"Does Mr. Dexter believe they were stolen?"

"What else can he believe? How could he have lost them in any other way, after carefully putting the envelope containing them into his wallet and replacing it in his coat pocket?"

"Why, then, did he not immediately notify Mr. Young of his loss, and have the matter adjusted?" demanded Mr. Spencer.

"Because he was called by telegram to Boston that same night, and did not discover his loss until the following Monday. Meantime, on Saturday, Mr. Young had sailed for Europe."

"Am I to infer that you believe I stole those papers from Mr. Dexter's wallet, Miss Elliot?" Mr. Spencer's tone was curt and incisive, his face like chalk.

"I accuse no one, Mr. Spencer. I have simply given the only solution to the perplexing affair that has suggested itself to me, reasoning logically from some previous knowledge of the matter, together with what I have learned to-day."

Her companion moistened his lips

and passed his hand once or twice over his face. Then in sudden anger he inquired:

"But do you imagine that this 'logical reasoning,' as you term it, will save Robert Dexter from the consequences of his crime. Do you think that a judge and jury would accept it as evidence when offset by such *prima facie* proof as I possess?"

"That remains to be seen," calmly replied Gertrude. "Yet there is another point I have neglected to mention which *might* have some weight."

"Pray enlighten me," said the gentleman, with a skeptical smile.

"It is merely the fact that it was my money which redeemed the check——"

"Thunder!" the man exploded at this unlooked-for statement.

"Yes; Mr. Dexter, who was our man of business, happened to be in need of ready money at the time he gave Mr. Young his note; but he could not rest easy until the matter was finally settled, so he borrowed the amount——"

"From you?" again interrupted her companion.

"From the Elliot estate—it was before my mother died." Gertrude did not think it necessary to explain just how that money was borrowed. Her object was simply to prove that it had been paid and the check redeemed.

"Ah! So it was from Daniel Dexter you learned of this affair! And he is your attorney! I thought you were a poor girl, Miss Elliot."

"So I am," she frankly admitted. "We were very unfortunate in many ways after my father died. Our expenses were large during my mother's last illness, and when the estate was settled, I found it would be necessary to earn my own living. However, we are wandering from the main subject, and I still fail to see how you are going to prove that the check you hold has been tampered with, since the man who was wronged is no longer living."

"I am going to prove it by producing the man who first detected the crime and called Mr. Young's attention to it—that gentleman's private secretary."

Gertrude's heart sank at this unforeseen menace to her friends. Mr. Dexter would be crushed; Robert's promising future ruined. She could not have it so. Surely, such dishonesty, such a foul wrong would not be allowed to prosper. Ah, no—and she began to breathe more freely as she resolutely turned from this depressing view of the matter. There was a Power that governed with equity. She would not try to bear this unnecessary burden; she would leave it, and trust that this impending evil would be overruled for good in the end. Then suddenly a feeling of compassion for this man who, possessing many noble traits, was allowing hatred and revenge to undermine and weaken his life and his manhood, arose within her, and she forgot for the time her own fears in her pity for him.

The silence was becoming awkward for both when she, at length, lifted her eyes and met his frowning gaze.

"Possibly you may be able to do all that you threaten, Mr. Spencer," Gertrude began, with gentle gravity. "You may succeed in creating a scandal that will bring shame upon Mr. Dexter, who has already been almost crushed to earth by his son's misdeeds; and entail lasting disgrace upon Robert Dexter, who, all too late, has come to his senses, and is now struggling to repay his father the money he has squandered in the past. But what satisfaction do you expect to reap from such a dishonorable procedure? Will it make you really any happier? Will it add to your self-respect, even if you should succeed in convicting your so-called foe? You claim you can prove his crime by the testimony of a man who was private secretary to Mr. Young; then this man either does not know the truth regarding the redeemed check, or you will both be guilty of perjury to achieve your purpose. Will that be a pleasant memory, think you, to haunt you throughout your whole future? And for what are you doing this—for what are you planning to wreck the character and life of a brother man? Not because of any real injury that *he* has done *you*,

but because you, by your own act, goaded him to retaliate with a passionate blow, and so brought upon yourself the contempt and ostracism of your class. So you have nursed this grudge for years, and it is evident that you are stung as with a lash every time you think of it; but, though you may not realize it, it is the lash of self-condemnation which goes to prove the truth of what George Eliot wisely says: 'That is bitterest of all—to bear the yoke of our own wrong-doing.'

"You are spreading it on pretty thick, Miss Elliot—excuse the slang," said Hugh Spencer in a voice that shook from mingled anger and shame. "But, leaving all that, I am wondering how you, with your lofty ideals, could ever have loved a man who was weak enough to fall as Robert Dexter fell—in more ways than one—even though he may now be following in the steps of the old-time repentant prodigal."

A scarlet blaze leaped to the cheeks of the fair girl at this fling. Had she ever really loved Robert Dexter, she wondered! Almost involuntarily she lifted her hand to her neck, where, underneath her dress, hung the little locket which had been repaired while she was doing her marketing that day, but which now contained the face of her father in place of that of the younger man, which for several years had been treasured there.

"And yet you——" she began, then stopped, appalled at the thought she had so nearly voiced.

But he understood; and he also flushed hotly. Yes, he-himself, with all that brood of evils that he had just betrayed to her rankling in his own heart, had presumed to plead for her love and ask her to become his wife!

"I stand condemned," he returned, in a constrained tone, his lips twitching convulsively from conflicting emotions.

"Pardon me," said Gertrude gently. "I have no right to condemn you; but I know that every time one yields to temptation to do wrong one is weakened, morally and spiritually; and, Mr. Spencer, until you learn to substitute love for hate, honor for dishonor, jus-

tice, for injustice, you will never attain the standard of true manhood. When you do this you will find that you have no enemy upon whom you desire to be revenged."

"Your theory is a very beautiful and lofty one, Miss Elliot, but, beyond the power of frail humanity to live up to, I fear," Mr. Spencer observed.

"It is not my theory, nor any one's; but it is the *command* of One who said—'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"And my neighbor is—Robert Dex-

ceased, and walked quietly from the room.

As the door closed after her, the man dashed the wallet, in which he had carefully replaced the check, violently to the floor, and set his heel upon it.

"I have made a d——d fool of myself!" he exclaimed, between his locked teeth. "I have simply gained her everlasting contempt. And she thinks I stole that check and note! Good Lord! She believes me a thief, with all the rest!"

His face was almost purple, and the



"All our furs have been stolen during our absence."

ter, I suppose you would say. Nothing short of a miracle would effect such a metamorphosis as that! You perceive what an incorrigible reprobate I am!" And a mocking laugh concluded the acrimonious sentence.

"No—not you, Mr. Spencer," said Gertrude softly, as she lifted luminous eyes to his, "but the evil something that is struggling for supremacy within you. You will conquer it, however. You will *have* to conquer it; it is *inevitable*—as inevitable as the response of the universe to the Omnipotence that rules it."

She turned quickly from him as she

veins stood out dark and tense upon his forehead and neck. He gave the wallet a vicious kick that sent it spinning to the farther end of the room. Not once since the day of that never-to-be-forgotten interclass race had he been wrought up to such fury; never before had he been so consciously humiliated, and the desire for revenge took a firmer grip than ever upon him.

He spent a very uncomfortable two hours going over and over the recent interview with Gertrude. Finally, exhausted with his passion, he resolved to go to bed; but, as he stooped to recover

his misused wallet, he muttered in a sullen tone:

"I'll get even with him yet, all the same."

CHAPTER XIII.

When Gertrude came down the next morning Joyce informed her that Mr. Spencer had left for Newport. He had eaten a light breakfast, and Jerry had driven him to town to catch an early train.

Gertrude was greatly relieved by his departure, and during the week and a half that followed prior to the return of the family she enjoyed a quiet, restful season that was very refreshing.

She had one or two tilts with Joyce, however, which caused her to fear that he might become troublesome again, while his manner, whenever he came into her presence, was both perplexing and annoying; it was obsequious, yet it bordered upon the insolent.

She saw Mr. Dexter a few days after her interview with Mr. Spencer, but said nothing about the discovery she had made regarding the missing check. She felt that he had enough on his mind already, and she resolved to wait and see if Hugh Spencer would not weaken in his designs upon Robert. At all events, there would be time enough to tell her story when he showed his hand. She even dared to hope that she might yet persuade him to surrender to her the check and note—for she believed he had both.

The family returned the first day of September, and Hugh Spencer sailed for Europe on the third. Gertrude did not even meet him during the one day he was at home; he was very busy with his packing, and she attended closely to her duties. But she was very light of heart, for it was evident, since he was going abroad, that he had deferred indefinitely all action regarding the check.

A week later Mrs. Young and her daughters made a trip to the mountains, and Gertrude had another respite. But the first of October they were all

home again, and the usual routine of the house was resumed.

Gertrude became conscious almost immediately that she had fallen under the ban of Miss Young's disapprobation, for the girl was unusually cold and haughty in her bearing toward her. However, she went on the even tenor of her way, but smiling quietly to herself as she wondered what the high-toned Isabelle would say if she knew the exact state of affairs regarding Mr. Hugh Spencer and herself.

A little later the young ladies received an invitation to join the family of a railroad magnate, whom they had met at Newport, on a trip to the far West, the tour to be made in that gentleman's own private car.

They left at the beginning of the third week in October, and were not expected to return until the middle of December.

Mrs. Young resolved that she would take advantage of their absence by having her own winter dressmaking attended to, and one morning, armed with a multiplicity of keys, she mounted to a storeroom in the third story to inspect her last year's wardrobe, with a view to this end; also to overhaul the family furs to ascertain if they needed repairing or remodeling.

Half an hour later the sharp summons of a bell sent Julia, the chambermaid, flying up-stairs to see what was wanted.

She was told to ask Miss Elliot to come at once in the storeroom.

Gertrude responded immediately, to find Mrs. Young looking very pale and laboring under great, though repressed, excitement.

"What has happened, Mrs. Young?" she inquired, in surprise.

"Shut the door," cautioned the woman, with a warning gesture.

Gertrude obeyed, then turned an inquiring look upon her companion, who resumed, almost in tears:

"Miss Elliot, I have made an appalling discovery! All our furs have been stolen during our absence; also some very valuable laces."

Gertrude sank weakly upon a chair.

"Oh, it cannot be possible!" she faltered.

For reply Mrs. Young threw back the lid of a cedar chest, and revealed it—empty.

"This was full of valuable furs," she observed. "Five thousand dollars would not replace them to-day. They were carefully encased in linen and packed away last spring, as usual, and, knowing that some of the garments would need repairing for winter use, I came up to-day to look them over. This is what I have found," she concluded, indicating with a despairing gesture the empty chest.

"And—the laces?" breathed Gertrude, with pale lips.

"They were in a strong pasteboard box, and locked in the deep drawer of that bureau yonder," replied Mrs. Young tremulously. "Some of them were heirlooms that belonged to my mother and grandmother; some were wedding-gifts to me from dear friends, and nearly all were priceless, because of tender associations aside from their own intrinsic value, which was great."

"When did you see them last?" Gertrude inquired, while she grew hot and cold by turns.

"The laces were here the day before I went to Newport; for I came up to get some pieces I wished to take with me. The furs I have not looked at since I put them away last April. I suppose it was careless not to have them put in storage," Mrs. Young concluded, with a regretful sigh.

"Did you find the chest and bureau locked to-day?" queried Gertrude.

"Yes; to all appearance nothing had been tampered with, and everything in the room was in such beautiful order."

"I am very sure the furs were here, Mrs. Young, when this room was cleaned," Gertrude observed, "for I helped one of the girls move the chest, and we both noticed how heavy it was; while, if there had been nothing in it, it would have sounded empty."

"Who did the cleaning here?" Mrs. Young asked.

"Letty and Julia; and I did not leave

them alone in the room a minute—not because I doubted their honesty, but girls sometimes have a curiosity to rummage, so the cleaning was done under my own eye, and I locked the room as soon as we were through. The key has not been out of my possession since, until I passed it over to you, with the others, on the day of your return."

"What shall I do about the matter, Miss Elliot? I feel perfectly helpless, particularly as my son is away."

Gertrude sat a moment in thought. The situation seemed very grave to her, and, as the robbery had been committed while she was in charge of the house, she felt exceedingly uncomfortable over it.

"How would it do to send for a private detective, put the case into his hands, and say nothing about your loss to any one until he has looked into it?" she finally suggested.

"I am sure that is good advice, and I will act upon it at once," was the resolute reply.

Mrs. Young closed and locked the chest as she spoke, then both ladies left the room, fastening the door securely after them.

The following evening Mrs. Young received a call from an elderly gentleman, with whom she was closeted for an hour or more.

The next day she announced to the housekeeper that an old acquaintance of her husband, with his wife, would arrive at the Heights the following Tuesday, to be her guests for the remainder of the week.

They came on the day they were expected, but on the morning following their arrival Mr. Cummings became suddenly indisposed, and was confined to his room most of the time during his visit, even his meals being served to him there.

But Mr. Cummings was a very active man for an invalid; especially during the meal hours, when all the servants were busy below, and when, with noiseless tread and dexterous hands, he employed himself in systematically searching every inch of ground above the first floor, and with a thoroughness

that proved him an expert at his business.

Mrs. Cummings, who possessed a very pleasing personality, was also on the alert below-stairs. She was very gracious without being too free with the servants; winning the heart of the cook, whom she feed liberally in return for the dainty dishes which she prepared for the invalid above, and who with undisguised pride showed her over her immaculate domains, even allowing her to peep into various places which no one else, save the housekeeper, was permitted to enter.

Then during the small hours of the night both husband and wife might have been seen flitting about the lower portions of the house, penetrating even to the darkest recesses of the cellar. The stable, also, was subjected to careful inspection.

Their visit finally came to an end, and the day following their departure Mrs. Young met them by appointment in a private parlor of a New York hotel.

"We have been comparing notes," observed Mr. Cummings alertly, as he glanced at his wife; and no one would have believed that this vigorous, dapper gentleman and his comely companion were the middle-aged couple who had spent the previous week as guests at Kalmia Heights. "And we have come to the conclusion that this is an unusually mysterious case. At first, both my own and my wife's suspicions, fell upon that remarkable young housekeeper of yours——"

"Miss Elliot!" gasped Mrs. Young, appalled. "Why, I am sure the girl is the soul of honor!"

"She certainly impresses one that way," thoughtfully returned the detective; "but it is rather unusual to find a person of her years maintaining absolute self-possession under all circumstances. Nothing throws her off her guard; she appears equal to any emergency, and seems to have carefully thought out every move before she makes it. That young woman has a long head, Mrs. Young, and I predict she will yet make her mark in the world."

"You can never make me believe she is dishonest," Mrs. Young stoutly affirmed. "Mrs. Thomas I would not have felt so sure of—who knows but what she did it, after all?" she concluded, with animation, as this thought came to her.

"But she could not have taken the laces, for you say they were all in the box just before you left for Newport," Mrs. Cummings here interposed.



"Now we can prove that the money was paid!"

"That is so," admitted Mrs. Young, the perplexed expression returning to her face. "But it is simply absurd to suspect Miss Elliot. It is true she had the keys and full sway in the house during our absence; but she says the furs must have been in the chest when the storeroom was cleaned, for she helped one of the girls move it, and they remarked how heavy it was."

The detective smiled slightly as she concluded. Her arguments proved nothing; but he saw she had strong faith in her housekeeper, which only tangible evidence against her would destroy; hence he did not press that point further.

"Well," he remarked, rather glumly, after a thoughtful pause, "I am compelled to acknowledge that we failed absolutely to gain even a clue. I am

impressed, however, that the thief is in your employ, for if the furs and laces had been stolen by a regular crook, there are many other valuables in your house that would also have been taken."

"That is true," Mrs. Young gravely admitted.

"I made one discovery, while we were with you, which I hoped would lead to something definite," Mrs. Cummings here observed.

Both her husband and Mrs. Young turned an inquiring glance upon the speaker.

"Your butler hates your housekeeper," she continued. "Have you any idea what the reason is?"

Mrs. Young smiled as she replied:

"Joyce is obstinate and supercilious, and, having been allowed to run things about as he liked while Mrs. Thomas was with us, he rather rebelled against Miss Elliot's authority. They had a tilt or two when she first came, though she finally brought him into line. He has done better ever since; but I had no idea he entertained any special ill-will against her; and I am sure she uses him well."

"Well, he does hate her," said Mrs. Cummings positively, "and some time he will make her feel it. He seems to me to be a cur—a sneak, and I'd get rid of him if I were you."

"He is a first-rate butler when he is made to toe the mark," said Mrs. Young, frowning slightly; "and I have never seen anything to indicate that he is not perfectly honest."

"Neither have I," returned the detective's wife. "We couldn't find a straw pointing to him; but, intuitively, I do not trust him. Sometimes when I have seen him looking at the housekeeper I have felt a shiver creeping along my spine; his eyes are hideous."

"Well, that is not evidence," observed her husband. "And it is rather mortifying that, after all our trouble, we have been unable to get any clue to this affair. Perhaps, now, it may be well to make a stir about your loss, and watch every one in the house closely to see what effect it produces."

Mrs. Young went home and acted upon this suggestion, and for a time considerable excitement was manifested among the servants, and the atmosphere was uncomfortable.

Mrs. Young confided to Gertrude what measures she had pursued, and was somewhat surprised when the girl quietly told her she had suspected from the first that Mr. and Mrs. Cummings were detectives. She also expressed great disappointment upon learning of their failure to solve the mystery of the missing furs and laces.

However, things at Kalmia Heights gradually settled down to their regular routine, and, as none of the servants gave notice to leave, it looked as if no one in the house could have had any hand in the robbery.

Meanwhile Gertrude had noticed that Joyce was beginning to manifest more aggressively his old insubordination and superciliousness; while not infrequently she would find him regarding her with a strangely malicious look in his narrow eyes. She tried not to mind it, but at times it gave her an uncanny feeling, and she resolved that upon the first really tangible provocation she would dismiss him.

Evidently Joyce had no intention of being dismissed, for he cunningly kept within bounds, and Gertrude's conscientious scruples would not permit her to deprive Mrs. Young of an efficient butler for personal motives.

About the middle of November, Gertrude, finding she had some leisure time, offered to assist Mrs. Young with the unbalanced accounts of which she had once spoken.

The next morning Mrs. Young came to Gertrude with some account-books, and a box filled with bills, letters, etc., and, after explaining what she wished done, left the girl to bring order out of chaos. They were records and papers pertaining to Mr. Young's private expenditures, which he had always kept separate from his general business transactions. During the last few months of his life his health had been so poor he had neglected to make up his books or file his papers; hence the

confusion which now confronted Gertrude.

She labored on them, at intervals, for two weeks, and one evening, at the bottom of one of the boxes, she came upon three check-books—the returned checks neatly laid between the covers, and held in place with a rubber band.

She was about to lay them aside when something prompted her to open the one lying on top. A low cry escaped her as she glanced at the number of the first stub. It was 990. With fluctuating color and trembling hands she slipped the stubs through her fingers until she came to No. 1026. This called for a check for four hundred dollars.

With breathless haste she proceeded to examine the returned slips. She found each one in its proper place until she came to No. 1025. The next one was No. 1027. Swiftly she went through the remaining checks. No. 1026 was the only one missing, and instantly she knew that it must have been the fatal one with which Robert Dexter had tampered, raising it from four hundred dollars to fifty-four hundred dollars, and which was now in the possession of his bitter enemy, Hugh Spencer.

She sat thinking deeply for several minutes; then, with a regretful sigh, she replaced the checks and laid the book aside. What she had learned could not be of any assistance to Mr. Dexter; instead, it only went to prove the fact of his son's crime.

She returned to her work, beginning to feel very weary of it, and resolved, since she was nearing the end, that she would try to finish it that night before she retired.

There was quite a pile of bills yet to be checked off on the ledger; then all the papers must be neatly filed and packed in their boxes preparatory to returning them to Mrs. Young.

She opened the ledger and took up a handful of bills—having already labeled them and written the amount of each underneath the date—and began to check them, when her attention was arrested by the unusually large amount of cash on hand which appeared in bal-

ancing the month on which she was at work.

Glancing at the opposite page containing the credit account to ascertain the reason for this, she drew a startled breath as she read the following entry:

December 19. To cash received (from D. D.), \$5,400.

CHAPTER XIV.

A shock of mingled joy and triumph sent the blood coursing rapidly through Gertrude's veins.

"Now we can prove that the money was paid!" she exclaimed, with gleaming eyes, as she penciled a cross against the line.

Taking a note-book from her desk she carefully copied the entry, together with the number of the page in the ledger.

Then she gave her mind wholly to the work still before her, and did not leave it until it was finished, when she breathed a long sigh of relief that her task was done, yet feeling well rewarded for her labor in the discovery of that important entry.

Late as it was, she penned a letter to Mr. Dexter, asking him to make an early appointment for her to come to him, as she had something of importance to communicate.

She also wrote a brief note to Hugh Spencer, telling him of the entry in the ledger, and where it could be found.

Three days later found her in Mr. Dexter's office in New York, when she informed him that Hugh Spencer had the missing check, and meant to use it against Robert out of a spirit of revenge for the defeat and humiliation he had suffered at Yale. She did not tell him of his proposal of marriage and her rejection, which had led up to this discovery. She also gave him the copy she had made of the entry in Mr. Young's ledger, which proved beyond question that the amount which the check called for had been paid.

"Well, it is a great deal to have learned so much," Mr. Dexter said, somewhat doubtfully. "All the same,



"If she had been the thief these things never would have been found in this house."

Spencer has tangible evidence of a crime in the check, and if, through that private secretary, it can be proved it was raised from four hundred dollars to fifty-four hundred, I suppose the law could be enforced, even at this late day, and in spite of the fact that the full amount has been paid. However, we can do nothing while the man is in Europe. We will have to await his movements on his return, and keep our own counsel regarding your recent discovery."

"It is a great puzzle to me how he got possession of that check," said Gertrude reflectively.

"Stole it, of course," returned Mr. Dexter, flushing hotly. "He doubtless overheard my conversation with Mr. Young; and while we were looking at the picture in the drawing-room he must have taken it from my wallet for the express purpose of gratifying his revenge."

A look of pain flitted over Gertrude's face. She could not forget Hugh Spencer's manner or expression when she had suggested the same explanation to him; nor his tone when he had exclaimed: "Am I to infer you think I stole those papers from Mr. Dexter's wallet, Miss Elliot?" He had seemed genuinely amazed and confounded by the inference.

In many ways he had impressed her as being a fine man—a man above the average, intellectually and morally; and the revelation of the mean-spirited revenge that possessed him, and the dishonorable methods which she believed he had em-

ployed to achieve it, aroused a feeling of rebellion within her. Was he another "Doctor Jekyll" possessing two individualities in one, and each battling for the supremacy?

"There can be no other explanation," Mr. Dexter resumed, breaking in upon Gertrude's troubled musing. "He became a thief that he might take a terrible vengeance for a fancied wrong; but Robert was a thief, too, and"—with exceeding bitterness—"I am no better than either of them."

"Don't, Mr. Dexter!—you could not hurt me worse than by applying such a term to yourself," said Gertrude, hot tears flooding her eyes. "We have no right to keep our own faults or those of others constantly in mind. A sin that is repented of should be remembered no more. I am sure you will yet have cause to be proud of Robert, and I am going to hope that Mr. Spencer's better nature will triumph in the end.

He certainly has many good qualities; he is devoted to his mother, very kind to his sisters, and courteous and generous in his dealings with others. But for this one blight upon his character which has been revealed to us, it would be hard to believe him other than a noble-minded gentleman. Oh, why cannot everybody be governed by the law of love?" she concluded, with a wistful sigh.

"Everybody would if everybody were like you," said the lawyer, with tremulous lips; "and then earth would become heaven."

Gertrude laughed sweetly.

"That proves, does it not?—that every one has to make his own heaven, and that love is the transforming power; it is certain that hate, malice, and revenge will never accomplish it. Now, dear Mr. Dexter, don't worry; somehow I feel as if everything will come right."

Next morning there came letters from the young ladies who were on tour in southern California. While in Los Angeles they had met a Mr. Phillip Latimer, owner of an extensive fruit-ranch, ten miles out of the city. The young man was a friend of Mr. Van Lenten, the gentleman with whom they were traveling, and he had invited them all out to spend a week at Belmont, Mr. Latimer's place. In Josephine's letter to her mother she spoke of him in this fashion:

He makes me think of Miss Elliot, mama; he is so quietly self-possessed, and seems so sincere, as if he would always put the best of himself into everything he undertakes.

At the end of another week she wrote again in the most enthusiastic vein:

Belmont is a perfect paradise, covering miles and miles in extent with no end of lemon, orange, and olive orchards, to say nothing about the immense vineyards. The estate was left Mr. Latimer a few years ago by a wealthy uncle. The grounds are exquisitely laid out; the buildings, though of wood, are beautifully cared for, and, being all painted white, seem like a little white city set off by itself in its luxuriant surroundings. Mr. Latimer himself is really a charming man, and, mama, don't let Isabelle know I have said anything, but he has eyes and ears for no one else but her. I think

he isn't as handsome as the manager of his packing establishment, Mr. Robert Dexter. The manager is the son of that Mr. Daniel Dexter who used to come to see papa, and he says he has known Miss Elliot almost all his life. He is younger than Mr. Latimer, and we are great chums. We all take the grandest cross-country rides—there are splendid saddle-horses in the stable—and everybody is having such a good time that Mr. Latimer insists that we spend another week with him.

Mrs. Young read this latter portion of the letter to Gertrude, and looked rather grave as she asked some questions relating to Mr. Robert Dexter.

Gertrude thought things were getting strangely mixed, and wondered what would be the outcome of the Misses Youngs' trip to the far West. It was evident that none of the family knew of the feud between Robert Dexter and Hugh Spencer.

"Josephine is a dear little thing, and I believe that Robert will develop into a splendid character," she mused, when thinking it over alone afterward; "but—that quarrel! Well, I am sure, now, that I never really loved him," she went on, in a relieved tone, and feeling quite happy over what the girl had written, "and I hope he was not as badly hurt as he seemed to be when he left me that night. Time will tell, however."

If Mrs. Young were troubled about Josephine's naive confession regarding her attraction toward Robert Dexter, her anxiety was submerged in consternation, the next morning, upon discovering that a beautiful hundred-dollar needle-point handkerchief was missing; also another valuable piece of lace that had been part of the trimming of an evening dress hanging in the store-room closet.

Without saying a word to any one, she sent immediately for Mr. Cummings.

That gentleman looked very alert and well pleased after listening to her story.

"The thief is beginning to overreach himself—or herself," he remarked, with a chuckle. "Is your housekeeper at home?" he inquired the next moment.

"No, she drove away to market about

fifteen minutes ago, and will not be back for a couple of hours; but Miss Elliot never——"

"Can I get into her room without attracting the attention of any of the servants?" the man interposed.

"Yes, but——"

"Well, I'd like to if you don't mind," grimly persisted the detective.

Mrs. Young looked distressed, but replied:

"Very well; Julia, the chambermaid, is in the laundry, and there is no one up-stairs. You know the way, and I will keep watch that no one follows you."

Mr. Cummings slipped noiselessly from the room. He was absent about twenty minutes, then returned wearing a look of unmistakable triumph.

"Mr. Cummings, *don't* tell me that you have found any evidence against my housekeeper!" Mrs. Young exclaimed, as she read success in his gleaming eyes.

"I have found your handkerchief and the piece of lace," he replied, as he drew a small parcel from his pocket.

"Where did you find them?" faltered the woman.

"Under the carpet beneath the bureau in Miss Elliot's room."

"I would as soon suspect my daughters of such an act as that girl," said the matron, sinking weakly back upon her chair.

"Humph! and with about as much reason," returned her companion emphatically. "Miss Elliot knows nothing about the matter; if she had been the thief these things never would have been found in this house."

"What! Then who——"

"That remains to be proved, and we will have to wait and watch a while longer before we can make a decided move," Mr. Cummings observed. "We have, however, got hold of a very tangible thread, and I am going to advise you to allow me to put these things right back where I found them, and await developments."

"Very well. I shall be guided wholly by you. Do you suspect Joyce, Mr. Cummings?" inquired Mrs. Young, sud-

denly recalling what had previously been said about the butler's hatred of Miss Elliot.

"That I am not prepared to say at this stage of the game," the man replied. "There are two theories which seem plausible—the real thief put these things in Miss Elliot's room either as a matter of self-protection, or with the spiteful intention of getting her into trouble. In the latter case, if no stir is made over their loss, we may expect another effort to be made to throw suspicion upon her."

The detective replaced the laces where he had found them, then went his way. After his departure Mrs. Young wrote a full account of her losses to her son, telling him what steps she had taken to clear up the mystery. Hitherto she had refrained from mentioning the matter, as she did not wish to annoy him or mar his enjoyment of his trip; but now she began to feel the pressure of responsibility, and wished his sanction to the measures she had adopted.

She found it difficult to appear at her ease after this new discovery. She grew nervous, and lived in constant fear of missing other valuables, while she began to be very impatient for the return of her daughters. She also found herself watching both Gertrude and Joyce, and, remembering what Mrs. Cummings had said, she felt that there was something sly and treacherous about the man. More than once she was conscious of a malicious gleam in his eyes and a palpable sneer on his lips when receiving orders from the housekeeper; while Miss Elliot calmly went about her business, as usual, and everything moved along with the perfect system that had characterized her régime from the first.

Gertrude herself was becoming conscious that Joyce was growing more and more insolent, until she began to feel that she had reached the limit of endurance, and it would be better to dismiss him than to live in such a state of inharmony. But she decided to wait until after the return of the young ladies, as she wished everything to run

smoothly upon the occasion of their home-coming.

When that day arrived the house wore its most attractive appearance, and the reunion of the mother and daughters was a most joyful one.

Mr. Van Lenten had spared nothing to give his party pleasure, and, had not pressing business recalled him, would have been glad to have extended their sightseeing another month.

It was an exhaustless theme, but that which stood out as the brightest experience of all, seemed to be the two weeks spent at Belmont; and even the self-poised and stately Isabelle grew effusive in rehearsing its attractions.

"Yes, mama," interposed Josie, in the midst of a glowing description, a sparkle of mischief in her dancing eyes, "Isabelle thinks southern California the most delightful climate in the world, and a fruit-ranch, of all places, the most attractive; especially when enhanced by the companionship of a dark-eyed, handsome, and polished gentleman, who, under certain conditions, is inspired to quote Byron, Shakespeare, Shelley, and various other poets——"

"Josie—what nonsense!" Miss Young began, in indignant protest, but with a conscious scarlet flaming her cheeks.

"And who," the roguish sprite continued, serenely ignoring the interruption, yet secretly enjoying her sister's confusion, "succumbed to the charms of your fair, elder daughter before the sun went down on the day of our arrival——"

"Josephine Young, you are supremely ridiculous! Mama, don't listen to her," observed Miss Young, with an assumption of imposing dignity. "Mr. Latimer was kindness itself to each and all of his guests; he neglected nothing to make every one happy. He is a perfect gentleman, and I admired him——"

"Admired!" And naughty Josephine drew in a deep breath between a pair of lips pursed up to resemble a crimson rosebud. "Well, on second thought, that word will do," she resumed complacently. "I believe the

synonyms are 'adore,' 'delight in,' and various other no less expressive terms."

"Josie, dear!" reprovingly admonished Mrs. Young.

"She appears to be in a tantalizing mood to-night," said Isabelle, half-inclined to be angry, yet on the verge of laughter at the girl's witchery. "But, poor child!"—with a glance of mock sympathy—"her own head has been turned by a vigorous flirtation with Robert Dexter——"

"Now, Isa——" pouted the pet of the household, but wilting visibly under this unexpected reversal of weapons, "you know Mr. Dexter was awfully busy, and couldn't go about with us nearly as much as Mr. Latimer."

"That is true, you artful dodger," retorted Miss Young, following up the advantage she had gained; "but somebody whom I know was 'so interested' in the packing of those 'luscious fruits' at Belmont; and Mr. Dexter was 'so kind to explain' the various processes of canning, pickling, preserving, etc. Why, mama——" and the girl turned with a triumphant little laugh—"Josie will be able to superintend all your preserving next year, and can tell you, to a penny and a pound, the proportionate weight and cost of putting up such table luxuries."

Mrs. Young laughed at these pleasantries, yet, as she searched the expressive faces before her, she conjectured that there might be an undercurrent of fact beneath all the seeming banter. As far as Mr. Phillip Latimer was concerned, she felt she need feel no anxiety regarding the future of her eldest daughter, if she had, indeed, become interested in the gentleman. The fact that he was a friend of the Van Lentens was sufficient guarantee of his character and social standing. Of Mr. Robert Dexter she did not feel so sure, even though his father, Daniel Dexter, had been greatly esteemed by her late husband; she had heard something of the young man's wild oats, and Josephine was the darling of her heart.



THE OUT-OF-TOWN GIRL IN NEW YORK

—BY—

GRACE MARGARET GOULD

earning their living—one with her pen, the other with her brush.

One of her first surprises came in the form of an invitation to a roof-garden tea to be given by her literary and artistic friends.

Now, to the out-of-town girl there was but one sort of roof-garden in New York; a place with gaily colored lights, bright music, rather flashily dressed women and men, and a vaudeville performance. Personally, she did not like roof-gardens. But, putting any prejudice she might have aside, she was anxious to go to the roof-garden tea.

She knew her hostesses lived in a big, up-town apartment-house, close to the river, and ten or more blocks above Grant's Tomb. She had heard them talk of their wonderful view, but never for a moment had she thought that they could have a roof-garden of their own on the top of the big apartment-house. And such an artistic roof-garden as it was! Just the most ideal spot imaginable for a summer afternoon tea.

Her friends had obtained special permission from the owner of the building to arrange a corner of the roof just as they wished; in fact, to get right down to business, they had leased the particular corner which had the very best view for the summer months. They had bordered it with porch-boxes, which were really nothing more than packing-cases in disguise, and they had filled them with growing plants. Being girls who

GENERALLY speaking, there is nothing very attractive about the thought of New York in midsummer. To the out-of-town girl, New York without the New York girl is a city bereft of its go and gaiety.

Of course everything is at a standstill, she reasons. Why wouldn't it be, now that the New York girl has fled?

Perhaps it is just because she has reasoned in this way that our little out-of-town girl is now experiencing one of the most novel surprises of her life.

She is in New York, and it's midsummer, and, to her astonishment, she is enjoying herself in ways she never thought of before. Though her fashionable and rich friends, who have entertained her so often, are all out of town, yet she is meeting other New York girls just as typical of the big city. Many-sided, interesting girls they are, all with a purpose in life, and many of them earning their own living.

To the out-of-town girl the fact that her new acquaintances were business women seemed to imply that their lives were filled with nothing but work. She took it for granted that they had no time whatever for pleasure, even though the two girls that she liked best were

never undertook anything that they did not understand, they knew just exactly the right sort of "potting soil" to get, and just how to properly drain the boxes. They used broken stone for the bottom of the boxes, and they were careful to have the grade just right, so that one end of the box was lower than the other, and that it had a small, drainage hole for the surplus water to pass off. The result was that the boxes were a beautiful mass of bloom.

The too intrusive sunshine was kept away from their corner with green-and-white awnings. Rugs of Japanese matting were spread upon the floor, there was a bamboo tea-table fitted with green-and-white china, all in Japanese design, and there were big brass and copper jardinières standing about filled with ferns and flowers. It was an ideal sort of an open-air room, and the view over and up the river, and across to the Palisades, was decidedly worth seeing.

Our little-out-of-town girl arrived at the roof-garden tea in time to see the sun set, and to watch the big night boats throw their search-lights as they went up the river. And such a good time as she had! The Russian five-o'clock tea was just an incidental to the

jolly picnic-supper; and later on one friend after another dropped in until they made a very merry little party, singing and laughing to the accompaniment of the mandolin and guitar.

At this roof-garden party our little out-of-town girl learned much about New York in the summer, where to go, and what to do; and, strange as it may seem, she heard much that was interesting about clothes and little fashion fads. The girls talked of little dress economies, the vogue of the ready-to-wear hair that you buy in the shops, and of the jolly time they had at the last Harlem boat-races.

In speaking of light summer wraps, the out-of-town girl was informed that everything is now the filmy scarf. It comes in the most exquisite of colors, and embroidered or printed in the most artistic of designs, and you wear it in novel ways.

"The very latest," said the prettiest girl on the roof, "is a sort of double-scarf arrangement, and

it makes the most effective dress accessory. The way you do it is this: You buy two scarfs—that is, if you can afford it—and you drape one over each shoulder, so that it falls in a straight line in front, and an equally straight line at the back. They do not cross



The fashionable new double-scarf drapery.

the shoulders in shawl style at all. The belt or girdle of the gown holds the scarf in at the waist-line, both at the back and the front. It's something decidedly new to wear your scarf or scarfs in this way, and it's really altogether lovely."



A private roof-garden at the top of a New York apartment-house. This was where the roof-garden tea was held.

From the new draping of the scarf, the conversation drifted to the coiffure. And what our out-of-town girl does not now know about the mysteries and tricks of the trade as to fashionable coiffures isn't worth knowing. It isn't the hair that you have, but the hair that you can afford to buy that counts nowadays. And what isn't there that you can't buy in the way of false hair? There are transformations, as the new pompadours are called, galore. Some parted and some brushed back in a mass of fluffy waves. There are puffs by the yard, big and little, any color you want, cheap and expensive, just as your pocketbook can afford. You can buy coronet braids of wavy hair which will give your own scanty locks the effect of being most luxuriant. There are figure eights, and braids ending in cute little curls; and perhaps the most convenient of all are the cachepeigne curls. They are mounted on a comb, and can be adjusted at a moment's notice just where they are most needed. Even the girl whose early training has prejudiced her against false hair is pretty apt to look with favor upon the comb with its group of fluffy little curls.

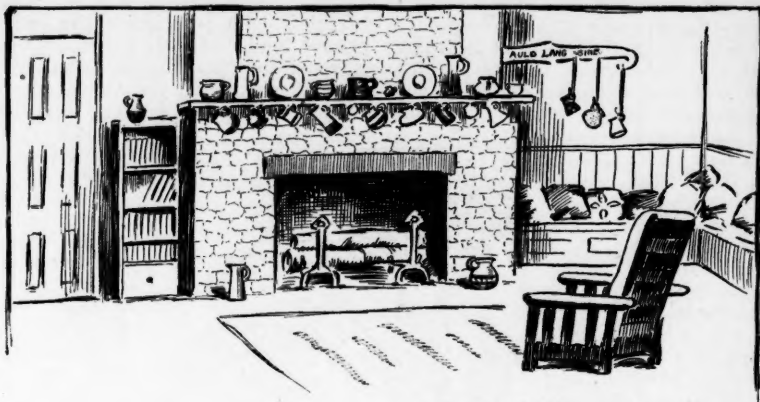
The new coiffure is steadily growing in size, so the out-of-town girl was told; and the reason given was the big mush-

room-hat. The fact is, all the hats this summer would have an unfinished effect if it were not that the coiffure is purposely built to suit their extravagant and weird vagaries of brim.

It seems as though nothing could be done to stop the antics of the fashionable hat-brim. They go on their way protruding just where you wouldn't expect them to, and being knocked in in the most unexpected of places.

A little well-worth-while millinery hint that the out-of-town girl picked up at the roof-garden tea, was that there are more ways than one of renovating the hat that through constant wear has lost much of its one-time freshness. 'Way back in March, when the first spring hats were hurried from Paris to get here in time for Easter, some of the most extravagant creations in chip and Leghorn showed their brims faced with satin. The hats thus faced were extremely becoming, and with the favored few who could afford them were very much in vogue. Now, the girl who couldn't afford early in the season the model hat with the satin-faced brim, renovates her own hat, which is apt to be faded and somewhat the worse for wear, by facing the brim with satin. It makes the hat look like new, and gives it a decided *cachet*.

Another little millinery economy is



A jug collection shown to artistic advantage.

to paint back to beauty the roses or other flowers which have lost their color, and are no longer an addition to the summer hat. Extremely good results are obtained by using water-color paints. The blue rose, which has been so fashionable all summer, has proved one of the quickest to fade, but a clever touch of paint will quickly restore it to its original beauty.

If our out-of-town girl thought that she was going to be lonely in New York because she had happened to drop in upon the big city just when it was supposed to be at its dullest, she quickly found that she had made a great mistake. Other invitations followed the one which had introduced her to a tea on the roof of an apartment-house.

One Sunday she was one of a jolly little crowd who went on an all day's walking trip on the top of the Palisades. She "did" Dreamland down at Coney

Island, and saw everything there was to see. She spent a day drinking in all the beauties of the Sound; going up to New Haven and back in one of the boats which make the trip as a Sunday excursion. She not only had dinner at Manhattan Beach, but went to many odd little restaurants in New York that she had never dreamed of before, where the dinner was served in the open air. She took early morning walks in Central Park, where she

forgot entirely that she was in a bustling city. Heretofore, she had only known the park from an auto; now she found out it had many hidden beauties only to be discovered when walking. And to her surprise, as she went here and there, she saw many fashion ideas which appealed to her.

One thing in particular was an odd little apology for a coat. It was known, so she heard, as the waistcoat cape, and it was quite the smartest thing she



*The New York girl and her Teddy Motor Bear—
He of the changeable electric eyes.*

had seen in many a day. It was really a triple shoulder-cape effect, joined to a waistcoat front, the waistcoat fastening with four big buttons. This odd little coat was seen made up in Rajah and embroidered pongee, with a skirt made of the same material. So captivated was our out-of-town girl with the little wrap, that she plans to copy the model in dark-blue serge for a late summer wrap.

Of course, the out-of-town girl couldn't be in New York and keep away from the shops; that wouldn't be natural. She found it, too, such fun to prow around for bargains. In her search for this thing and that, at half-price, she came across many odd little dress novelties. One was a belt made of something of which you couldn't possibly guess. It was of

straw deftly woven into an effective mesh. The belt was lined with pongee, and in front there was a straw buckle.

She was also attracted in the shops to the wonderfully dainty handkerchiefs which were displayed. The new and prettiest of them showed a touch of color introduced in one way or an-

other. There were fine white handkerchiefs with just inside the hem a printed border of little green, four-leaf clovers; and there were others which showed pink, blue, or violet dots in graduated sizes as a border. And then,

perhaps, the prettiest of all were the white handkerchiefs with a printed colored seal in one corner; say in green, violet, pink, red, or blue, and upon this seal was embroidered a tiny flower. These handkerchiefs were fifty cents apiece, and were most attractive.

It was when she was shopping one day that the out-of-town girl ran right into one of her old school friends—the girl, in fact, whom she generally visits when she comes to New York.

This particular young woman is the out-of-town girl's richest and most fashionable

friend, and, of course, seeing it is midsummer, she was only in New York for an hour or so, she just ran up in her auto from her mother's country place down on Long Island, where she was staying to rest up a bit before going to Newport for August. She wanted our out-of-town girl to go



A smart outing costume showing the new wrap called the waistcoat cape.

straight up to where she was boarding, pack up her dress-suit case, and come right along down to Long Island with her. And so insistent was she that the out-of-town girl did exactly as she was told, going in her friend's big touring-car, which was out in front of the shop.

Our little out-of-town girl had the surprise of her life when she stepped

when motoring at night, and that he was really the most fashionable fad of the summer. She was also told that he was too expensive to become over-popular, like so many of the other Teddy Bear fads, such as the leather watch-fobs bearing a miniature reproduction of Teddy in silver-gilt and the bags and pocketbooks which show his burned-in picture.

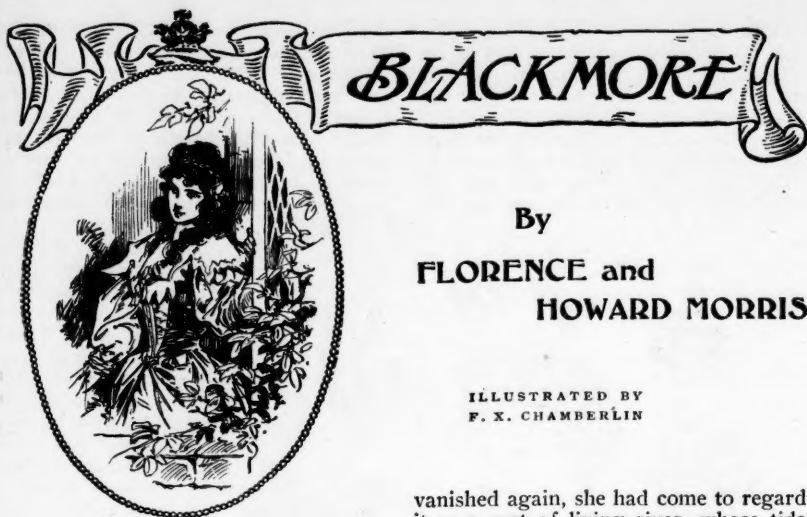


Fashionable novelties in ready-to-wear hair.

in the car. To her perfect astonishment she saw, comfortably seated back among the cushions, a large, brown Teddy Bear, but it was not the sort of Teddy Bear to which she had grown accustomed, but a bear dressed in the most fashionable of motor togs. He had on a brown kid automobile-coat, with a cap to match, and, as she began to study him closely, she discovered that he had the most curious eyes. They were big, shiny, and white, and it never occurred to her until her friend explained that they were really little electric lights. And mercy me, they were changeable! for when Teddy was pressed in one way his eyes grew green, and then if you gave him another little tender embrace the green light faded to white. This Teddy Bear was expressly for automobile use, and the out-of-town girl was informed that his electric-light eyes were most convenient

The fads of the New York girl are always a delight to the out-of-town girl, and she heard of many new ones as they flew over the smooth Long Island roads. To collect jugs, she was told, is a high-in-favor fad with the girl whose mother has a country house.

"I have gone in for the jug fad myself," said her friend; "and I have all sorts of curious ones in my collection. Ever so many of them I picked up abroad, and some are decorated with crests, and some with quotations, and lots of them have a history of their own. They are really very decorative, too, if you want to use them in that way; some of my collection will be the first thing that will greet you as you step into the hall at our house. They add a lot to the looks of the fireplace—that is, I hope you will think so. Sister scorns them, however. She says there's nothing novel about collecting dozens of jugs. What do you suppose she is collecting? Corks; just think of it! Some of them are the most comical-looking things you ever saw. They are in the form of the funniest faces, the upper part is made of rubber in different colors; and then she has a lot more that are little wooden figures, which are cleverly carved and gaily painted. But here we are, and let me introduce you to my jug collection first," said the out-of-town girl's new hostess, as the auto sped up the broad driveway.



By
**FLORENCE and
HOWARD MORRIS**

ILLUSTRATED BY
F. X. CHAMBERLIN

THE Lady Dorinda leaned her dark head against the rough casement of the lattice-window, and peered wistfully out across the wooded slope of the castle grounds.

The dusk of an English June was settling in uncertain shadows over the landscape, and the gardens and terraces of Blackmore would soon be given over to the silence of night.

The Lady Dorinda smiled a little sadly, as she thought how many evenings during her short life had been spent at this window, her governess dozing before the fire, the servants gathered in their own quarters so far away in the great building that not a sound of their homely mirth and pleasure could reach her ear.

She had chosen this as a special point of observation, because half a mile away, over the trees of the park, one could catch a glimpse of the high-road, wending its uncertain and perilous way down from London town.

Along this road, at intervals of months, and sometimes years, had come the one excitement which broke the monotony of the girl's life, and since, with equal certainty, along this road it

vanished again, she had come to regard it as a sort of living river, whose tide occasionally bore to her shore some fragment from the outside world.

So established had this feeling become, it was almost without surprise that she noticed two horsemen making their way between the giant trees at the entrance gate. The distance was too great to distinguish their features, but she could see that they were conversing together as they came slowly up the hill toward the castle. A glow of pleasurable anticipation flushed her cheeks as she turned quickly to the fireplace.

"Waken, madame," she cried. "Of a surety Phillip comes at last. See, now, was I not right? And you, foolish croaker, with your tales of London's lures and spells! Phillip has come, I say"—giving her a gentle shake—"and he has surely brought me another such string of pearls, or a jeweled brooch, to wear upon my wedding-day. Bestir yourself, madame! Summon the servants! Have lights brought. The traveler will need to sup. I am away to meet him."

Across the courtyard, down the marble steps of the terrace, and into the darkness of the trees, which overhung the horse-block, she flew with skirts held about her. Half-hidden by the

dense shadows, she stood listening to the sedate oncoming of the horses and their deep breathing as they climbed the rising ground. Nearer and nearer they came, until, reaching the block, one of the men drew rein, and swung himself to the ground. He threw the rein to his servant, and stood for an instant looking gravely at the lighted entrance to the castle; then from out the darkness at his side there came a whirlwind of white-and-yellow brocade, a mist of dark curls and pearls and roses; two soft arms flung themselves about his neck, and two warm lips were pressed against his own.

"Loiterer," a laughing voice cried, "so shall you be punished!" Involuntarily the man's arms closed about her, and something in their clasp filled her with a sense of strangeness which caused her to recoil. With a little cry she caught him by the arm, and dragged him forward within the circle of light streaming from the doorway. So they stood for one long moment looking into each other's eyes, and the wonder flitted through the girl's mind, how even in the darkness she could have mistaken this man for the other.

He was tall and dark, and browned by the sun; grave almost to sternness, with keen gray eyes, which held within them a certain sadness, as of one who has looked hard on life. But in that instant Lady Dorinda knew, with the instinct born to women, that he would never look severely upon her.

"I crave your pardon, sir," she said, making him a sweeping curtsy. "My wits of a surety must have been a-straying with overmuch wondering and waiting. Now I know that you are Sir William Cassiby, who is come from the north to stand with Sir Phillip on our wedding-day.. 'Tis nigh a week ago that my betrothed has sent me word of your coming, and bade me give you a warm welcome in his name." She held out her hand, while the dimples, never absent for long, appeared about her mouth again. "Perchance my welcome was a thought too warm—What say you, Sir William? An you promise to forget my unmeant bold-

ness, you shall be spared the kiss the bride must give her guests upon her wedding-day."

"That were but uncertain justice," he answered, looking gravely down into her lovely face, "that I should be defrauded of my rights, because for once fate has, by accident, been kind."

The pink in her cheeks deepened under his glance, and with it came the consciousness that she had kept him standing long enough before the castle door; so with another curtsy she ushered him within.

Although she had thought Sir William Cassiby a man ready of speech and quick of action, the Lady Dorinda found cause to change her opinion as she perched in the great oak chair at the plentifully laden supper-table.

In the presence of the duenna, Madame D'Olney, and the servants he maintained a reticence bordering upon severity. Beyond asking an occasional question, Dorinda's chatter drew forth no response save a smile, but this smile was so full of appreciation and sympathy, that, in spite of his silence, she felt she had at last found a friend.

The moon had risen when they left the table, and, prompted by this feeling of confidence, she led him forth into the garden among her roses. Slowly they paced the even paths between bushes of gorgeous bloom, speaking no word of praise, for words seemed poor. Only she touched a flower now and then, and when the silence grew too deep to last, she broke it with a shy laugh.

"How dark you stand against my flowers!" she said, "Phillip, when he is here, quite puts my buds to shame with his gay doublets. Yet——"

He answered: "Where is Phillip now?"

"Of a surety you should know," she said, quick turning to look up at him. "Are you not Phillip's friend?"

"Perchance the best he has," he answered slowly; "but time has passed since we have met. Did he not say I have not lately been in London town?"

But she passed his question by. "Since you are Phillip's friend you

should be mine, also, for in a fortnight I must be Phillip's wife."

"Must be?" he questioned.

She turned full in the path and faced him.

"Do you not know? Has he not told you of it?" she asked incredulously; then, seeing that he shook his head, she hurried on: "In truth, it is a strange tale, and old, and all began so long ago I often question me if the wish of one, years since at rest, should so control two lives. Will you listen to the story, Sir William, since you are Phillip's friend and mine? For at times I fear, and at times I am glad, but always I know that never two needed a friend more than we."

He took her hand and raised it to his lips.

"Lady Dorinda," he said earnestly, "you honor me far above my merits. I am your humble servant, in word or deed, to counsel or to guard."



Two soft arms flung themselves about his neck, and two warm lips were pressed against his own.

And so she told him her story as they wandered among the roses, while the moonlight washed the path they trod and turned it to a silvery way beneath their feet.

She said: "When I came to this world my mother died. On my third birthday, my father went to fight for his king, and in the battle which closed that bloody time laid down his life. Of a surety I think it mattered but little to him, for his heart was buried in my mother's grave. One fear only hung dark over his last hours. The great estates and name of Grancourt must pass to a distant cousin, being the next male of kin, and him my father hated and mistrusted. My lady mother brought with her upon her marriage great possessions in money, and these of a right belonged to me. That my cousin should in no way work me a harm, and thereby gain the money as well as the estates, my father bound me

over by a will unto the care and keeping of his lifetime friend, Sir Anthony Blackmore, to be by him upreared and tended, and—mark you this, Sir William—by midnight of the night before my twenty-first birthday to be married to his son, the heir of Blackmore."

She put out her hand hesitatingly and touched his arm, for his face was turned from her, and his eyes were fixed where the shadows from the trees embroidered the moonlit lawn with jet-black tracery.

"You are not listening," she said. "So long a tale is fain to make you weary; yet I would have you hear me to the end."

Sir William answered her:

"My lady, I am listening with all my soul."

"The Lord of Blackmore had two sons," she then continued; "of these, the elder, Anthony, was well grown, a lad of

twelve or thereabout when first I came, a little child, to live within the castle. Hot of head and quick of temper he was; and one day, angered beyond control in some dispute with his father, he ran away to France, and wandered on into strange countries, until at last came tidings of his death. Poor lad! to die alone so far from home, and yet"—she paused with a little sigh—"and yet if he had lived, his fate might then have been as Phillip's is."

"What man is there upon this earth," he said, with earnest gaze, "who would not welcome such a fate?"

"Nay, 'tis no time for flattery. I fear this man on whom 'tis thrust welcomes it not. But Phillip is the soul of chivalry, as you must know, and, since by the condition of the deed, should we not wed before that hour, my fortune lapses to the crown, and I go penniless into the world, wed me he must, if only for his honor's sake. For such as he there is no choice."

"But there is choice for you," he said, "and since it turns toward him——"

"We will not speak of that," she interrupted, blushing at the remembrance of Phillip's greeting which had gone astray. "It is of his mind I would learn. How speaks he of me? Why comes he not oftener to Blackmore? Why—oh, an hundred whys that you can answer."

"Of a truth," he responded slowly, as if choosing carefully his words, "Phillip has never named your name to me save as his friend and playmate when a child." Then, seeing the look of pain which crossed her face, he added hastily: "But men speak least of that which they most prize."

The Lady Dorinda scanned his face a moment, and, failing to read there aught beyond his words, threw out her hands as one abandoning a path which leads no whither.

"Mayhap," she said sadly, "to-morrow will unravel the tangles of to-day. Feel you not the chill which creeps up from the valley? 'Tis time we were within—but, lest your dreams be tinged with melancholy, come with me to the

balustrade where lies my guitar—that I may sing a song to chase away all evil spirits."

And thus she sang to him:

The moon, my love, is very new,
A pale, slim crescent in the trees;
The grass is wet with silvery dew,
The nightingale sings in the breeze—
His song, my love, is all of you.

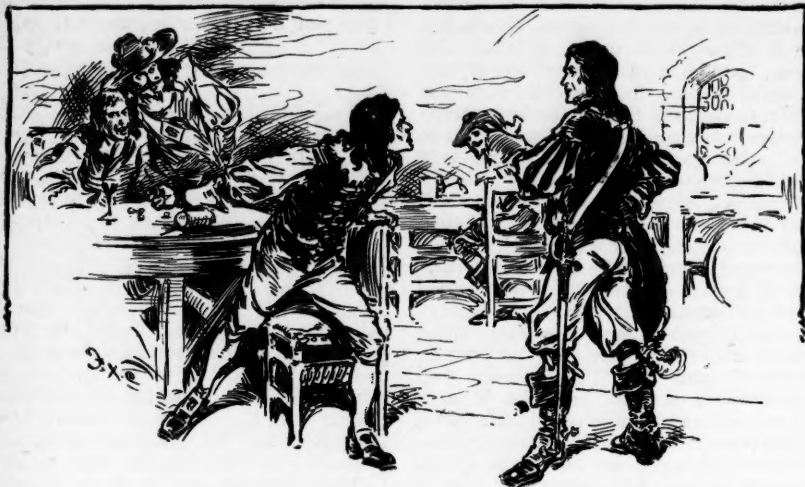
The moon, my love, is very old:
A hazy glory in the west,
The shadow of a tale that's told
Of lover's love supremely blest,
Of joys which all this world enfold.

As the last notes of her low, sweet voice died away, the Lady Dorinda gathered her silken draperies about her, and with a curtsy went within.

There lay but a fortnight between the coming of Sir William Cassiby to Blackmore and the day that was to see Dorinda wed. During the week which followed his arrival, as many moods flitted across her soul as clouds across the fair June sky. Now she was laughing and singing in the sunshine among her flowers; again she would stand in her lattice-window watching the road to London, an expression half-expectation, half-fear in her eyes. Then, under the stars, grave and sweet, she spoke solemnly of the duty laid upon her by the dead, until Sir William knew not which mood was the true one, but found each more bewitching than the last. The days seemed all too short for the many things they had to tell, and in that every passing hour brought their companionship nearer an end.

Yet was each watching anxiously for Phillip, in spite of the joys which they had found together. Little as Dorinda knew of the world, she felt that for the sake of her own peace in life, which lay beyond her wedding-day, he could not come too soon. While, with a certain grim determination, Sir William muttered to himself: "And it be her heart's desire, he shall be here, though I should drag him all the way from London town."

One day as they stood together on the terrace, looking toward the entrance gate, he asked her suddenly: "In what time can the journey be made?"



"Death and confusion, sir!" he cried. "I thank you not for this interruption!"

She, reading his meaning, answered him: "If one ride fast, it may be done in two days' time."

And so they spoke no more upon the subject until there remained but five days before the appointed hour, when once again they paced the terrace side by side, Sir William accoutered for his journey. So intent was Dorinda on listening for the hoofbeats of the horse which was to bear him thence, she seemed to pay but scant attention to his words, and answered absently his questions.

At last he took her hand in his, as if to hold her mind to what he said. Sternly he spoke, as one who brooks no disobedience to his commands:

"My lady, there are two parts in this matter. I shall do mine, but all will come to naught if you fail to do yours. I go for Phillip. Honor and duty demand that he be brought. This much I swear to you, if I be among the living upon the day decreed, you shall be wed unto the heir of Blackmore. That is my part—your part lies thus, to be prepared 'gainst his return. Upon the night, go you to the chapel at sundown, take with you the priest and such as be

needed for witnesses, and there remain until he come. Be ready, for, though the first stroke of the midnight hour may toll, yet will he be with you ere the last. Give me your promise, Dorinda."

Her face was paler than the palest blossom, yet she raised her eyes unflinchingly to his.

"I promise you," she said, "but I would ask a promise in return: that this be not farewell, that you yourself bring Phillip here."

Sir William looked away to where, among the trees, Hugo, the servant, led up his stalwart horse.

"If Phillip come there is no need for me; if Phillip come, this is good-by, my love."

A moment he gazed deep into her soul, then flung himself upon his horse and galloped down the avenue.

Slowly the Lady Dorinda climbed the stair; slowly she made her way to the lattice-window, and leaned her dark head against the rough stone casement, but she could no longer see the road to London town, for it was hidden in a mist of tears.

It was evening when the traveler,

jaded and dust-stained, rode into London. He penetrated to the fashionable quarter of the town, and drew rein before an inn of pretentious aspect, for, strange to say, he seemed to find it necessary to inquire the whereabouts of the lodgings of Sir Phillip Blackmore.

Arriving in the dusk, unaccompanied by any servant, the simplicity of his travel-worn garments in such sharp contrast to the gay brocades and laces worn by the gentlemen who frequented this hostelry, he received scant courtesy as he entered the tap-room.

Gathered about the tables was a company of young bloods of the day busy over dice and wine; while round the window of the bar another group made merry with the beribboned barmaid, whose laughter mingled its shrill treble with their deeper voices, as quips and jests flew back and forth.

Unheeding these, the traveler crossed the room to where the landlord bustled to and fro, attending to the wants of his guests, and, having waylaid him on one of his hurried errands, inquired in low tones if he could by chance direct him to the man he sought.

The landlord paused a moment, dripping tray in hand, and stood, his mouth agape, eyes full of wonder, staring at

his questioner. Then something in the calm command of the other's gaze brought him to his senses, and with a muttered apology he replied:

"Faith, sir, you must be a stranger in town, not to know Sir Phillip! Yonder he sits playing at dice; his honor's back is turned this way."

Without a word the stranger strode over to the table, and laid his hand upon Sir Phillip's shoulder.

"If this be Sir Phillip Blackmore," he said quietly, "I would like a word with him."

The man at the table was making a cast with the dice just as the other's hand touched his shoulder, and, glancing at the pieces as they fell, he pushed back his chair, sprang to his feet, and, with an oath, faced about.

"Death and confusion, sir!" he cried. "I thank you not for this interruption. You've changed my luck!"

"That is much to be regretted," the stranger answered, "but since 'tis on grave matters I would speak, I pray you abandon your game a moment that we

may confer."

"How now, Phil?" a youth at the far side of the table called out. "Graver matters than this, indeed, when you have won my hundred guineas! Is sport to be spoiled by this—er—gentleman?"



"There remains no time for words," he said, "but in a short space you shall hear from me again."

Sir Phillip's handsome, fair face flushed a deeper red than even the wine had dyed it, yet he took no notice of the interruption, beyond a wave of his hand to enforce silence.

"If you are not aware, sir," he cried, measuring the intruder with a haughty glance, "that gentlemen do not discuss business at this hour, 'tis time you should learn. To-morrow between my chocolate and noon I shall be in the hands of my valet, and may then find opportunity to receive you."

A slight, contemptuous smile touched the lips of the stranger. He stood looking down upon the angry man with an expression of indulgence such as one might show toward a wayward child, yet was there that in his bearing which caused the cooler heads to realize that he meant no trifling, and that Phillip was carrying the matter with too high a hand.

"My business will not bide your time, Sir Phillip," he replied, in the same quiet tone. "I bring a message of most serious import from a lady."

At this the youth who had spoken before sprang to his feet with a shout:

"S'dearth!" he cried. "A message from a lady, the sly dog! And what will Violetta be about when she learns of this? Another victim for the incomparable Phillip! And a country wench, I'll be sworn, by the look of her messenger!"

Some one caught him by the coat and pulled him abruptly down into his chair, for the stranger had rested one hand upon the table, and was glaring across it with an expression of ungovernable rage. A red spot burned beneath the tan of each cheek, and one could see the rapid pulsing of the vein across his temple. For the space of a moment silence reigned throughout the room.

All eyes were turned in their direction as if awaiting the outcome of the scene, and even some of Phillip's bravado fell from him as he watched the stranger's face. Yet in that brief interval did the man gain possession of himself, only his voice was a bit unsteady when at length he spoke.

"The name of Lady Dorinda Grantcourt," he said, "is too high to be defiled by such lips, else would I thrust your light words down your throat, that in the future you take more heed to the use of your tongue." Then, turning as if he intended all argument should be at an end, he bade Phillip sternly to accompany him, and together they strode to the other side of the room. There ensued a conversation of some length, throughout which the stranger held to his air of command, and whatever argument he brought to bear, certain it was that each moment Sir Phillip's submissiveness increased. At last they seemed to reach a satisfactory ending, for again the stranger laid his hand upon the other's shoulder, this time in more friendly fashion.

"Nay, save your thanks and your apologies, Sir Phillip," he said, "and forgive me if I grant not an answer to your question. It is my whim to be unknown to you. We meet as farers on the great highway, whose paths join for a space and then diverge. When I leave you upon the road to Blackmore, safe journeying toward your bride, my destiny will take me far from here. Be ready at high noon, for, as I have reminded you, the shortness of time brooks no delay."

A look of almost tragic sadness, which had been fighting to find expression during the entire interview, now settled upon his countenance, as with a parting salute the stranger turned to the door and disappeared into the night.

It was two hours past noon on the day following, when, irritated almost beyond endurance by a fruitless wait at the appointed meeting-place, the stranger mounted the stairs of Sir Phillip Blackmore's lodgings, and, thrusting aside the protesting valet, strode into his presence.

The lavish elegance of the room, with its furnishings of gold against a background of green brocade, forced itself upon his notice, and seemed a fit setting for the figure of its owner. He was reclining upon a couch in one corner, wrapped in a gorgeous dressing-gown, and it needed but one glance

from the stranger's keen eyes to show him that the man was still under the influence of an overnight debauch.

He came to a stand directly before the couch, and spoke in curt, sharp accents, as if to penetrate the maze which seemed to enfold the other's senses.

"What means this folly, Phillip Blackmore? Two hours have I waited before the Gray Horse Inn. You should have been two hours on your journey, and I find you here. What does this mean?"

Sir Phillip turned with sleepy insolence, and laughed indifferently in his face.

"An it please you, mend your manners, sir," he answered, with the utmost good humor. "Had you had wits enough to spend your time within the tavern, where they serve most excellent wine, mayhap you'd be in fitter humor to talk to a gentleman."

"Gentleman!" the other exclaimed scornfully. "Have you wits enough left in that wine-soaked head of yours to know what means the word? Is it to accept the love of an innocent girl, and toss it about more lightly than you toss your dice? Is it to know that her whole future rests with you, and to lie thus idling here, false to the duty which God has put upon you, and to the name your father gave you?"

Roused somewhat from his lethargy, Sir Phillip supported himself on one elbow, and stared at the speaker.

"By Heaven! you go far, sir," he said; "and, though there may be truth in your words, they are a thought too strong for my stomach. By what right do you come here within my very door and berate me thus?"

"My right must remain mine own affair until I choose to make it yours. This much in explanation will I grant: the Lady Dorinda is very dear to me, and I would fain see her happy ere I go my way. To London town I came with the determination to seek you out and carry you to Blackmore, for I believed that in fulfilling her father's will and becoming your wife lay her surest path." His voice grew very tender,

and a wistful expression came into his eyes as he made an end of speaking: "Man, when so great a privilege is yours, why are you not in your place at her side?"

"The reason you may seek here," called a gay voice from behind, and, turning, the stranger saw the silken curtains had parted to admit the form of a girl. So enclouded was she in floating draperies of pink, that she looked a rose within a bower of green. Her yellow curls, which had been bent in a curtsy, were tossed aloft as she met his questioning look with one of bold defiance. "Phil does not go to Blackmore because I will not give him leave."

For a moment there was silence in the room, and when he spoke again a new sternness had come into the stranger's voice.

"And who are you, madame," he asked, "that you should direct Sir Phillip's goings?"

"Yesterday," she answered pertly, with a mocking laugh, "I was Mlle. Violetta of His Majesty's Players—to-day you do well to 'madame' me, but you go not far enough; you must 'my lady' me, also, for, between the dancing and the dawn, a priest with book and bell, and scant candle-light in sooth, tied the knot as tight as it could be tied, which made me Lady Blackmore."

Again the silence fell—this time so deep and brooding under the stranger's mood that Sir Phillip stirred uneasily upon his couch, and the smile died from the girl's painted lips. Yet when it was broken, instead of the burst of passion for which they looked, a note of relief thrilled his voice, as he turned to Sir Phillip with the question:

"Is this lady, then, your wife?"

Poltroon though he had proven himself in all else, under the steady gaze of the girl's blue eyes Sir Phillip showed no hesitancy in acknowledging her position, and, as the affirmation left his lips, the stranger turned and strode across the room, as though the world now held for him but one necessity—to be upon his way.

At the door he paused, and with his

hand upon the latch looked back across his shoulder.

"There remains no time for words," he said, "but in a short space you shall hear from me again." Then, seeing the look of consternation which crossed the weak but handsome face among the cushions, an indulgent smile broke through the severity of his expression. "In kindness, Phil; in kindness, my lad," he cried, "since you have given me my heart's desire," and he was gone.

The gold and crimson of sunset died away, and the grays of twilight deepened to the velvet darkness of summer night. Within the little chapel at Blackmore a group of people sat gathered close together, as though for mutual support and company, while the great bell in the tower tolled the hours away. Since the sun's last rays had fallen upon the quaint procession crossing the paved courtyard, each moment had seemed to crawl its way into eternity with sluggish pace; yet, as hour after hour brought its added note in the bell's deep tone, they fain would have lain hands on time, to check its course.

The Lady Dorinda, true to her promise, had summoned from the neighboring estates such friends of her ancient house as she desired to be present at her marriage, and with the priest and magistrate had repaired to the appointed place, there to await the coming of her betrothed. If the soft pallor of her cheek and the drawn oval of her face under its bridal-veil told their story of a struggle waged within, there were no other traces visible beneath the stately composure of her manner. Rejected, forsaken, she might be, but the pride of her race forbade her noticing the pitying glances of those about her, as it had upheld her in following her father's will against the dictates of her own heart.

One by one the candles upon the altar burned low, gutted, and went out. Little by little the shadows crept forward and flung themselves like spectral cloaks over floor and wall and carved rafters. Still the Lady Dorinda sat

motionless, head proudly poised, listening to hear the promised hoofbeats above the hum of insects and the nightbird's call.

At length a whisper ran from lip to lip among the silent watchers; they stirred uneasily as when a breeze rustles the ivy leaves upon the castle wall, then disappointed silence reigned again.

Some one in hushed accents inquired the hour, and the magistrate's deep voice echoed hollow from walls and rafters as he answered with grim finality: "It lacks but five minutes to the appointed time."

At this the Lady Dorinda rose and paced slowly forward to the chancel steps. Upon her delicate, upturned face there rested a look of awed expectancy, as though her soul feared, yet believed in the fulfilment of her lover's vow. Calm and white she stood, one hand laid lightly on the altar-rail, until there broke upon the listening ear the faint jar and rumble which preceded the bell's first stroke.

Then she turned, and bravely facing them, spoke in a voice firm and clear.

"My friends," she said, "I call on you to witness that I am here, ready to—"

She ceased—from without came the clatter of horses' hoofs, a shout, hurrying footsteps; then the chapel door burst open. A man with riding-cloak drawn close about his face, strode up the aisle and caught her hand in his.

"We are ready," he said, addressing the priest in a low voice.

Another candle gutted and went out, and the first stroke of the hour tolled.

As if startled by the sound, the girl looked quickly up into his face, then swayed a little, and hung back.

But he flung his arm about her, and with the whispered words, "Have faith," drew her forward until they knelt before the altar. And there, amid the solemn vibrations of the bell, the priest pronounced them man and wife.

Then it was that flinging back his cloak, his young wife still within the hollow of his arm, the stranger turned and faced the company. Proud and erect he stood, his hand upraised with



There on the silken cushions he laid her down, and with his arms about her, knelt waiting.

such commanding gesture, that their startled murmurs, as they realized 'twas not Phillip stood before them, died away.

"My lords and gentlemen, and you, Sir Thomas Alvin, magistrate," he said, "Phillip Blackmore two days ago was wed unto a maid of London town. Why I am here to take his place I would make plain to you, and of my words most ample proof lies ready to your questioning. Near a score of years ago there went forth from among you a lad, rash and impulsive, to seek for greater freedom beyond his father's lands. Of a truth, his life was many times in danger, but by God's mercy he was spared to cool his rashness and to curb his impulse. Fate, if such, my lords, you term it, brought him at last unto his father's home again, where, finding a great injustice was being wrought upon his father's ward, he tried to right the wrong ere he returned unknown into those foreign lands." He looked down with a tender smile upon the dark curls which rested on his shoulder.

"But Phillip has a wife, my lords," he said, "and, since there stands none other in my way, I come to-night to claim my title and my bride—for I am Anthony Blackmore."

They crowded forward, each eager to offer greeting—but the maid at his side, who had borne with bravery so much of sadness and suspense, found such great joy beyond her strength. He caught her as she swayed, lifted her, and bore her slight form across the courtyard and into the great hall of the castle.

There on the silken cushions he laid her down, and with his arms about her, knelt waiting. At last she stirred, opened her dusky eyes, and, raising two white hands, enframed his face between them.

"You have come back to me, Sir William," she breathed, with a lovely smile.

"Nay, sweetheart, not Sir William, but Anthony," he said.

And she answered him:

"William or Anthony, what matter, since 'tis you?"





THE GIRL WITH THE CINDERELLA FOOT

—BY—

AUGUSTA PRESCOTT

HOW THE WOMAN WITH BIG, AWKWARD FEET CAN TRANSFORM THEM INTO PRETTY, GRACEFUL ONES

SUMMER is harvest-time for the girl with the Cinderella feet. Dress skirts are short, pastimes are numerous, and the lightly tripping feet of the summer maiden are in evidence.

But to the woman with big, ill-shaped feet the conquests of summer become a torture. Her feet are large, and she knows it; her skirts hang disagreeably over them, and no one is as painfully aware of it as she; she is awkward and ill at ease; and the worst of it all is the apparent hopelessness of it. How can big feet be made to look little!

To alter the size of the feet may seem impracticable. Yet the student will inform you that a great deal can be done. The feet may be made pretty in shape, and they can be actually altered in size. In many cases smaller shoes can be worn, and the feet will feel more comfortable than in the old shoes.

Big feet, drawing a size 7—and many a summer girl has a foot that calls for a 7 shoe, and more—can be reduced from their swollen estate and made little. And many a foot which is ugly as to appearance, being wide and flat, can be made shapely simply by care and the putting on of pretty shoes.

The feet exert a much more important influence upon a woman's appearance than even she is aware. If a woman is awkward, it is, nine times out of ten, because her feet are ill at ease. If she walks badly it is because her heels are either too high or too low. If she stands ill, if she enters a room uneasily, or if she sits wrong, it is more than likely that the fault can be tracked right down to her feet.

There are those who claim that wrinkles come from feet that ache; and it is very likely that they do. The nerves of the feet and of the face are very closely allied, and, when the feet begin to be painful, there is very quickly a drawn look around the mouth.

The summer maiden may not have time, at this late day, to begin all over again in the selection and construction of her footwear. But she will be glad, now, to learn of some things which may make the feet look little, even though the footwear may be not all it should be.

To make the feet look small they should never be placed side by side. In seating herself, a woman should draw back her right foot until the back of her leg rests against the chair. All her weight is upon her right foot. She should now bend the right knee grad-

ually, and so sink into her chair. She seats herself gracefully, and with very little exertion.

When seated, a woman should never try to hide her feet. This calls attention to them. The skirt will fall in graceful folds upon the floor, but the tip of the shoe should be allowed to protrude. This is much more graceful than hiding the feet behind the skirt.

To make the feet look smaller, the shoes should be exactly the color of the gown, though not of the same material. Glossy leather makes the foot look smaller than dull leather, and the low vamp always has a diminishing effect upon the size of the foot.

If the summer girl is going to invest in just one more pair of shoes, and if she desires to get those that will make her feet look small, she can select a boot with a rather high, straight heel; its vamp should be low, and the shape of the boot should be rather long and narrow, no matter what the size of the shoe may be.

The stockings play a very important part in the comfort and appearance of the feet. They should match the shoes so that it is difficult to tell where one begins and the other leaves off, and they should be long enough for the feet. They should be as thin as one can afford, and they should be worn as rights and lefts. This simple device will save many a headache proceeding from the feet. Stockings that have become mixed will never fit the feet as well

again as those that have been rigidly preserved as rights and lefts.

That the feet do exert a powerful influence upon the appearance of the woman no observing person can dispute. The woman who stands awkwardly will confess to you that her feet are out of sorts. And at this season of the year there are few pairs of feet that are not out of sorts in some way. They ache and have that tired feeling, and they dominate the muscles, and even the

nerves and the spirits, in a most surprising way.

A woman went to her physician with a rheumatic complaint of the lower limbs. "It is your feet," said the doctor; "they are out of condition and swollen, and you have cramped them into your ordinary pair of shoes. Buy a large pair of shoes—no matter what size, so long as they fit—and wear them a few days. At night let your feet become warm in water as hot as possible; then rub them with skin food, and sleep in

knitted slippers. In a few days your feet will be well."

A woman who stands badly would do well to treat her feet in this fashion. Meanwhile she can practise standing better. She should rest her weight squarely upon both feet so that there is no strain; and she ought, when sitting, to change the position of her feet, so that the same muscles will not become cramped. She should rest her tired feet upon a pillow.

Sitting with the feet higher than the head rests the nerves wonderfully. A



SEAT YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT LEG DRAWN SNUGLY AGAINST THE CHAIR AS A BODY BALANCE

man does it when he wants to think, little knowing that there is a scientific reason for his relaxation. And the tired-out woman can recuperate wonderfully by the very simple trick of sitting down and putting her feet above her head. The strain is taken off the muscles, the congested condition is relieved, and the body rests almost as it rests during sleep.

Summer-time is supposed to be the season of high health, but there are those who never feel well in hot weather. They suffer from a feeling of general discomfort which they cannot explain, however real it may be.

Very often it is just the feet that are at fault, and by easing them up a little the feeling of discomfort disappears. Taking off the shoes and stockings part of the day so that the feet can breathe is the best of all cures for the curious, overwrought feeling which afflicts one in the dog-days. And the putting on of fresh shoes and stockings in the middle of the day will do a great deal of good.

If a woman is a business woman, her

best plan is that of alternating her shoes. She should have no less than six pairs, and she should make sure of wearing them in correct routine, so that each pair of shoes gets its regular amount of wear. The philosophy of this is that the pressure comes each day upon a different part of the foot, and the shoe which pinches the instep to-day can be set aside for one which is more comfortable to-morrow. It costs no more to have a number of pairs of shoes, and it certainly makes a woman much livelier and younger.

Keeping the shoes in good repair will make the feet look smaller. Big shoes—however big they may be—that are fitted out with neat new lacings, and polished as to both heel and toe, will look much natter than the shoe that is ill-laced and worse polished.

Big, floppy bows make the foot look big; run-over heels give a rolling appearance to the foot; stockings that sag make the ankle look awkward; and shoes that do not fit have a way of making the foot look shapeless. It is the same with the shoe as with the glove. It should be new and neat, and it should fit each small outline if it is going to look well.

The summer girl whose feet are too big or too awkward should practise a correct step. This is the rather long step, with the foot coming down very lightly, heel first. One sees it upon the stage. The step is at least the length of the foot, and the sole of the foot comes down almost flat, except that the heel may, upon close inspection, be seen to strike slightly ahead of the toe. The foot turns out very slightly, not with the exaggerated turn-out toe, but just sufficiently to give the body a graceful swing.

The main thing, in stepping well, is to take a long step, to bring down the foot lightly, though squarely; and to train both feet to step alike. The trouble is that one is apt to favor one's poor foot, and the result is a halting walk, or a mincing one.

The trick of throwing up the chin has a very perceptible effect upon one's walk. The balance of the body is



THE DANCING STEP WILL KEEP THE FEET FROM CRAMPING



THIS WILL STRENGTHEN ANKLES THAT ARE WEAK AND THAT TURN

thrown backward a little, and a woman steps more easily and more gracefully for carrying the tip of her chin high. If the chin be buried in the neck, the tendency is toward a heavy, stolid walk. It is only necessary to walk across a bare floor once or twice to convince yourself of this fact.

The foot and leg exercises are of the utmost importance to the woman who wants to walk well. To practise them it is necessary to put on a very soft-soled shoe, and to loosen the clothing. The "foot and leg exercises," as they are called, are three in number.

The first is very simple. It is the swinging exercise. With one hand upon something to steady herself, the patient stands erect, swinging first one foot and then the other. It is not necessary to swing high.

The second exercise is a little more difficult. The foot is lifted until it rests squarely upon a chair or low table. It is lowered, and the other foot is lifted in the same manner. It is merely a high-stepping exercise.

The third of the foot-exercises is practised now in every gymnasium. It

is a dancing step. One takes the waltz positions with the feet, and pirouettes about for a full minute, or until out of breath.

These exercises will keep the feet and the calves of the legs from cramping. If the ankles are weak, they can be strengthened by lifting a small weight upon the tip of the toe.

There are people who suffer from cold feet all winter, and most of the summer, and for these there is nothing the equal of hot sea-sand. The sand

should be shoveled from the beach and loaded into a flannel bag, which is encased in another, to keep the sand from sifting out. The bag is then heated in the oven, and is placed under the feet. Its great comfort can be described only by those who have experienced it.

When there is something actually wrong with the feet—and this means corns and bunions—the condition can be improved by resting the feet. Taking off the shoes and stockings will always help. And the wearing of very comfortable footwear will also assist. It may not be necessary to encase the feet permanently in shoes three or four sizes too big. But for a little while it will do them good to be pampered. Soaking in hot water, a course of sand-papery and vaseline, a little luxury in the way of thin stockings, and several pairs of shoes to alternate, will generally do the work.

There are, apparently, big-footed women whose feet look big simply because they wear big, flat shoes. And they will tell you that it is a necessity to do so. As a matter of fact, the natural foot is very far from flat. It is a

very complex member of the human body, and it is fitted out with two arches, both of which should be consulted in the selection of a shoe.

The arch upon the sole of the foot is a very pronounced one, and flat shoes will break it down, while the arch over the top of the foot requires quite a high heel, and a shape that conforms to the instep. If one were going to walk barefooted upon soft grass it would be different. But the hard city pavement calls for something to support the foot artificially, and this is found in the medium high heel.

In the hot days of summer, the very stockings one wears seem to rub upon the feet, and to cool them is as important as to ease them. Stockings can be made more comfortable by hanging them overnight in the window. The breeze cools the fiber of which they are made. If heel or toe seems rough,

the stockings can be turned wrong-side out and rubbed with a bit of soap. This keeps them from roughening the lining of the shoe. And the stocking that is not comfortable then should be thrown aside as a misfit. The wearing of it will permanently injure the foot.

To have small feet is a feminine ambition. But it cannot be accomplished by squeezing the feet into shoes that are too small. The shoes should be large enough to be comfortable. And, after the comfortable shoe is obtained, the foot can be treated until it is normal. By this process the size of the foot will actually diminish, until one can wear shoes that are several sizes smaller without interfering with the comfort of the foot. A foot that is well will set comfortably in a shoe that is much smaller than could be worn if the foot or its nerves were sick.

Answers to Correspondents

What will make a thin girl fat? I notice a great deal of advice to fat women, but very little to thin ones. Is there anything in the world that will fatten up a girl who has always been exceedingly thin?

MAUDE S.

This is a very difficult situation with which to deal. The thin girl has so much against her. She is nervous, and her food does not turn to material to cover the nerves. If the thin girl will eat what she craves, and all she wants of it, she will grow fatter. She should drink some good, warm drink before going to bed, and she ought to eat a little in between meals. Good bread and butter will help her; so will cocoa; as for chocolate, candy, and good maple sweets, they are most excellent for her stomach. I am going, in addition, to send you the formula for bust-development which has made many a thin girl fat.

Can you do anything for my hands? They are so ugly that I keep them hid in. Until I was thirty I had lovely hands, but they are now all veins, and very disagreeable to look at. I am sure a word would be much appreciated by many that are in the same predicament as myself.

HENRIETTA Y.

The trouble is that you have let your hands grow old. The hands begin to get old at the age of thirty. By forty a great change has come over them. The flesh is shrunken and the veins have come up. You can make them young again by soaking them every night in warm olive-oil. Then massage them a few minutes. In the

morning wash them in hot water and rub in a skin food, the formula for which I will send you.

Is there anything that can be done for insomnia? I am troubled with it so that I cannot sleep more than one or two nights a week. If you can help me I will appreciate it. I am very flat in the chest and would like a developer.

MRS. Z. A.

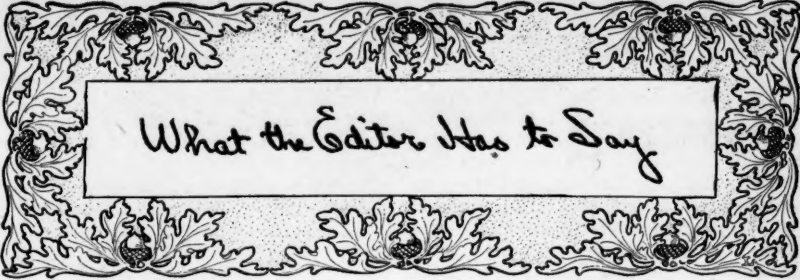
I am sending you a formula which is for bust development. Your druggist can put it up for you. About your insomnia, it is possible that you do not need much sleep. Stay up until eleven o'clock every night for a week. Then get up at six. This will give you seven long hours' sleep. Try this and report progress. There are many women who cannot sleep the usual night of nine hours, from ten until seven.

Your hints are always so kindly that I want to ask you to suggest something for me, for old age. I am only fifty-five, yet I feel sixty. My hair is rough, my figure is poor, and I have a withered complexion and a double chin.

AUNT LIZZIE.


The trouble is that you have let yourself go down. Begin by wanting to be better looking. Brush your hair and use the tonic, recipe for which I am mailing you. I want you, also, to massage your skin every night with the skin food, which you can prepare from the formula I am sending you. As for your skin, you must slap it twenty times night and morning, first with one hand and then with the other.

NOTE.—Mrs. Prescott will be glad to answer, free of charge, all questions relating to beauty. Women who want to improve their looks may address her. She will give advice upon matters of physical culture, beauty, deep breathing, diet, and health. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for a reply. Your name will not appear, and your letter will be regarded as strictly confidential. Address: "Mrs. Augusta Prescott, Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York."




What the Editor Has to Say

DID you ever notice that there isn't as much room now as there used to be, ten years or so ago? No matter where you live, in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago, in the South or in the West, in the country or in the city, you must be aware of the fact that there isn't as much breathing space for the individual as our fathers enjoyed before us. If you visit the Barge Office in New York you will understand why. Every day in the year one or more ship-loads of immigrants—men, women, and children—are landed there. With each successive day the crowd of newcomers increases in size. They all are going to find homes somewhere in the United States. Also, in spite of the fact that we have recently been warned against race suicide, the tendency of the human race is to multiply, especially in a country like this. Statistics are almost always tiresome, and generally unconvincing—but in round numbers the population of the country is ninety millions at present; within fifty years, in all human likelihood, *there will be two hundred million human beings in the United States.* Where are we all going to find room to turn round in those days? And how are we all going to live?



IN next month's SMITH's you will find an answer to this question. Few people are aware of the fact that at the present time Uncle Sam is at work on a job so large as to make the Panama Canal look insignificant along-

side of it. This is the reclamation of all the desert and waste land in the West and Southwest. The work is being pushed on with all the resources at the command of the richest government in the world. When it is completed it will be the most striking, and at the same time the most useful and practical, thing ever accomplished by any people. It will mean the opening of hundreds of millions of acres of fertile land, tracts larger than any European country, as a home for the fresh millions who are arriving here. It will mean a permanent increase to the wealth of the world, and benefit indirectly every American. In Idaho, in Wyoming, Arizona, and New Mexico the work is going on at forced speed. Bridges are being built, aqueducts and dams constructed, irrigation ditches are pushed farther and farther into the desert. This reclamation work, which employs a whole army of men, commanded by thousands of engineers, will be shown to you in a remarkable series of pictures in SMITH's for September.



NEXT month's SMITH's will contain a complete novelette by Charles Clark Munn. This is the first time that Mr. Munn, whose books, "Uncle Terry," "Rockhaven," and "The Girl From Tim's Place," have sold in the hundreds of thousands, has ever contributed anything of any length to any magazine. "Lorena of the Cape," his new story, has all the charm and heart interest of his other work. Hitherto it was only possible to get a

novel by Mr. Munn in regular \$1.50 form.

PETERS: Detective" is the name of a story by Eden Phillpotts in next month's issue. It is the tale of a boy who admired the great detective, Sherlock Holmes, and tried to pattern his life after him. In its humor and its sympathy with the nature of boys it is inimitable and indescribable. A fit companion story is "The Bedevilment of Cheerful Charles," by Holman F. Day. This is a funny story of witchcraft and demonology as studied and practised in a down-East village of the present day.

IN the September number, also, is a vitally interesting article on "The Lumber Trust," by S. C. Hutchins. It took several months of careful inves-

tigation to get together the information on which this article is based. That a few people have acquired joint control of almost all the available lumber in America will be a new fact for the majority of our readers, and an important one. The article as written by Mr. Hutchins is a fact-story, a great deal more interesting than nine-tenths of the fiction written at the present time.

WE want to call your attention to a new departure in the present number of the magazine. In this issue we have offered you, in story form, "The Road To Yesterday," one of the successful plays of the year. We have planned to present other plays to you in the same way. We wish that you would write to us and tell us what you think of the plan. It is a feature that no magazine has ever possessed.





Come— Follow Us; For This Business Will Raise Us All

—Shakespeare.

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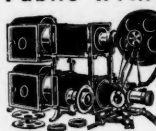
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¶ A man, by dint of thought and work, invents an article of food, of wearing apparel, or for domestic use. He carries out his conception; he gets it ready for the market; he recognizes the requirements of the law of the land and patents his article; he invests large sums of money in letting the people know about it, and he makes a success.

¶ Along comes a man who has no brain wherewith to conceive except to trade upon the other man's success, and "Uneeda Biscuit" becomes "Uwanta Biscuit"; "Jap-a-lac" becomes "Jac-a-lac"; "Cottolene" becomes "Cottoleo"; "Pears' Soap" becomes "Peer's Soap," and so on. All these imitations are purely and palpably intended to mislead the public, to confuse the buyer.

¶ Such a parasite not only lives on the brain and capital of another, but he also directly hopes to get an undeserved livelihood by playing upon the credulity of the public. He is a coward, as is proved by the fact that he imitates. His article is never so good as that which he imitates, for the same moral twist that plays upon a name will play upon the quality of the article. As a matter of fact, he has no need to think of the quality of his article, for he relies on his misleading label; hence, quality, to him, is of slight importance, and therein lies the fraud against the consuming public.

¶ The bid for patronage upon which he usually relies is his untruthful assurance that his article "is just as good as others" and—here comes in his strong point—"it is cheaper in price." And thus thousands are fooled: trapped into supporting a moral thief and a business coward.

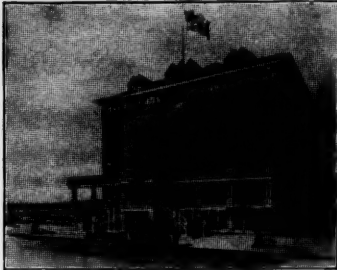
¶ Perhaps you fail to realize that you have it in your power to raise the standard of American business honesty by a refusal to patronize such imitations. For just in proportion as you make it easier or harder for these moral thieves to succeed, so do you make the business of honest dealings easier or harder for your husband, brother, father or son.

¶ Business will be honest just so far as the public demands it shall be. The two or three cents saved in your support of an imitative article represent the costliest investment you can make toward the lowering of these business ideals with which the men of your family must sooner or later battle when they go out into the commercial world. You, by your patronage, build up or tear down honest business ideals.

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